



# West Yorkshire Business Survey 2024

Research Report

September 2024

## Background and method

The purpose of the survey was:

- To provide a snapshot view of business confidence, investment experiences and intentions
- To provide the West Yorkshire Combined Authority with a significant level of detail about the issues currently affecting businesses
- Support in monitoring and reporting progress to Government against its strategic priorities

1,006 interviews overall; 998 computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI), 8 computer-assisted web-based (online) interviews (CAWI) among:

- Private, public and voluntary/community sector
- Organisations with at least one employee
- West Yorkshire districts only (since 2021 – year on year comparisons based on West Yorkshire only)

Targets were set by size, sector and district.

The survey took place in June and July 2024 (from 3<sup>rd</sup> June-29<sup>th</sup> July as a survey of LCR). (The previous survey took place from 10<sup>th</sup> July until 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023.)

The survey has been conducted regularly since 2015. It was carried out once every two years between 2015 and 2019, with data from 2015 and 2017 comprising of the Leeds City region only, and annually since 2019.

# Business performance

## Business performance – summary (1)

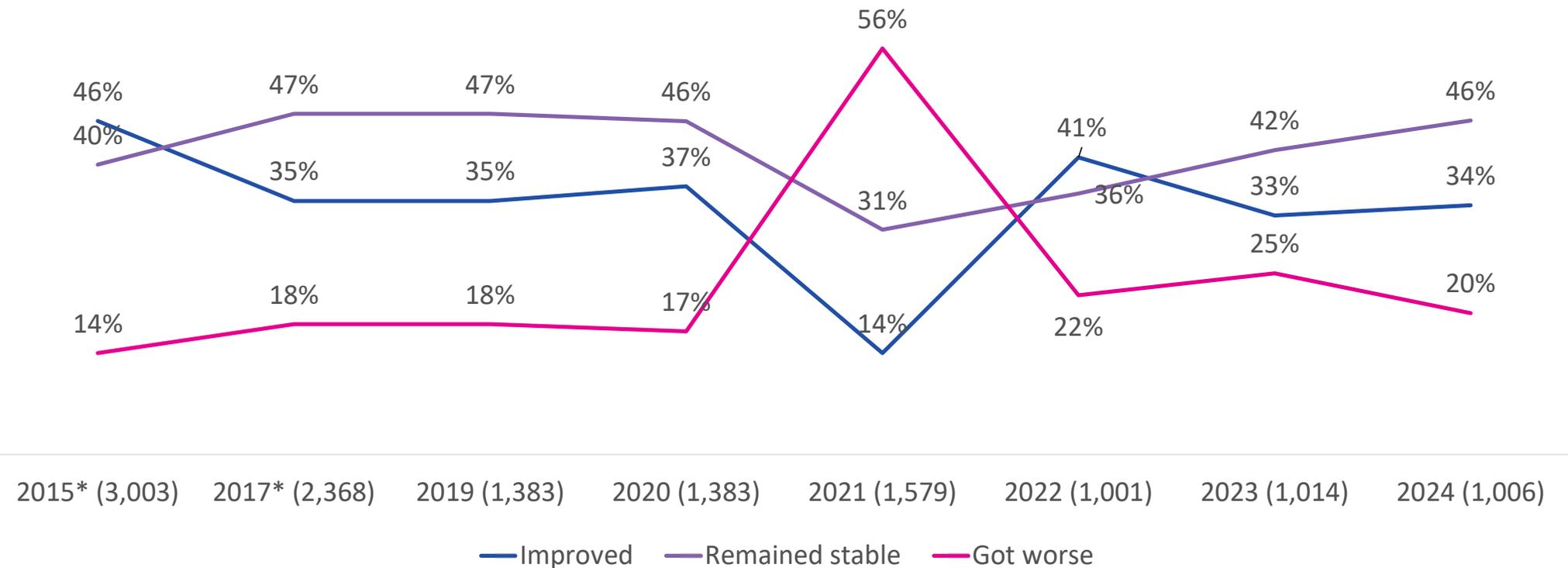
- Business performance has continued to stabilise, and perceptions of stability now sit at 46%, matching the levels recorded in 2020.
- As observed in previous years, medium to large companies are more likely to record an improved performance over the last 12 months, indicated by 48% of these companies (cf. 34% overall).
- Those businesses in hotels/catering public services are most likely to report an improved performance over the past year.
- Overall, 45% of businesses expect this stability to continue in the next 12 months, but the proportion of business that expect growth in this period has significantly increased to 38%, sitting 8% points above the 2023 expectations and 11% points above 2022 expectations.
- This level of expected growth is broadly consistent by company size. Interestingly, whilst a significantly smaller proportion of micro businesses experienced growth over the last year compared to medium/large business (33% cf. 48%), an equivalent proportion of micro and medium/large businesses predict growth over the next 12 months (39%).
- The picture observed in workforce trends over the past 12 months is broadly one of stability and is consistent with that recorded in previous years, with 69% saying the workforce has remained stable.
  - However, the larger the organisation size, the greater the likelihood of an increase being recorded. Accordingly, 29% of medium/large business recorded workforce growth, compared to a 15% of business with 1-9 employees.
  - Generally, the picture is consistent across sectors, but manufacturing (27%) and public services (25%) experienced an increase.

## Business performance – summary (2)

- The workforce trends recorded over the past 12 months are expected to continue, with 70% saying their workforce will stay the same, compared to 22% that expect an increase.
- At 63%, almost two thirds of businesses think that wage bills will increase. This sits significantly higher among businesses with 50+ employees, at 73%.
- Just over a half of businesses (52%) think their turnover will increase.
- Overall, 53% of businesses expect to increase their prices to customers, and the likelihood of this is greater as the size of the company increases. The expectation that prices to customers will rise has increased notably among businesses in the hotels/catering sector from 67% in 2022, to 73% in 2024.
- Following the highest levels of increased investment recorded in 2022, the proportion of businesses recording increased investment may be stabilizing at pre-pandemic levels (30%). As recorded in previous years, the likelihood of reporting increased investment grows with the company size, rising to 43% among companies with 50+ employees.

## Business performance in past 12 months

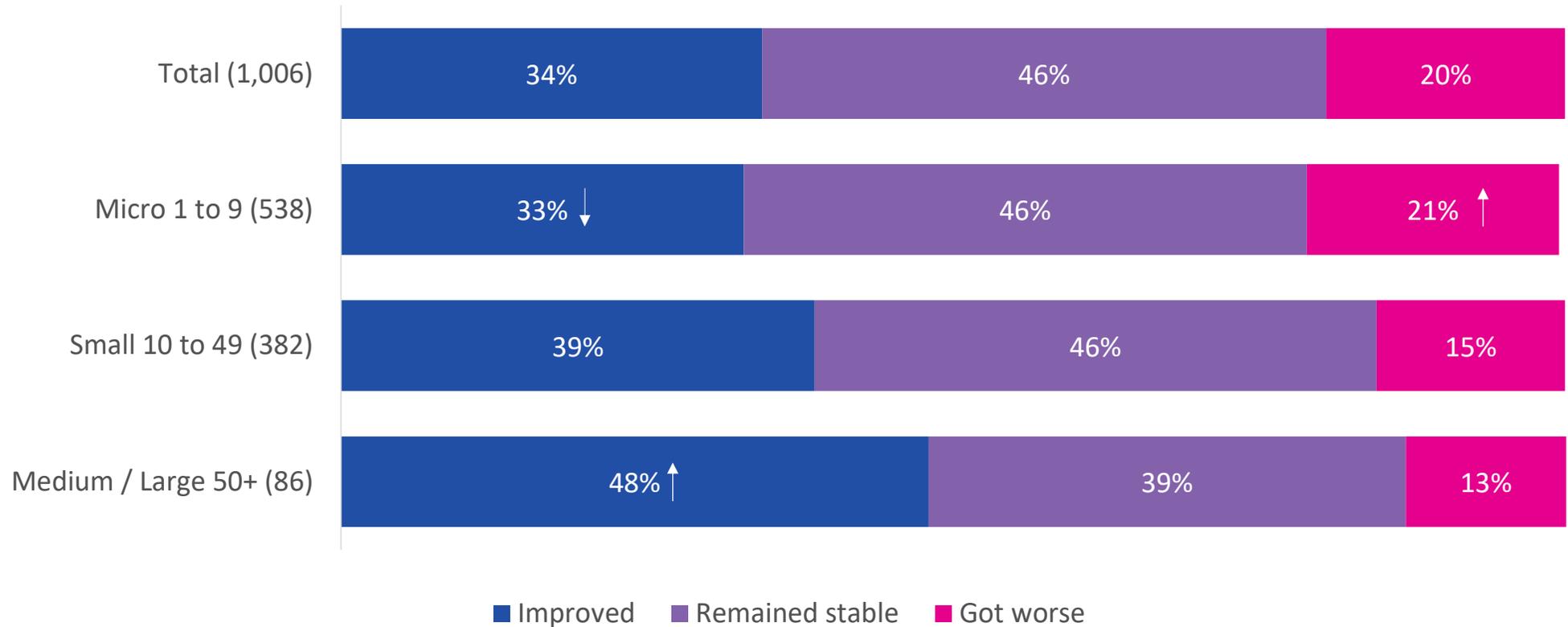
Business performance has continued to stabilise, and perceptions of stability now sit at the levels recorded in 2020.



Q4. Would you say that overall, your business/organisation performance in the past 12 months has improved, remained stable or got worse? unweighted bases shown in brackets

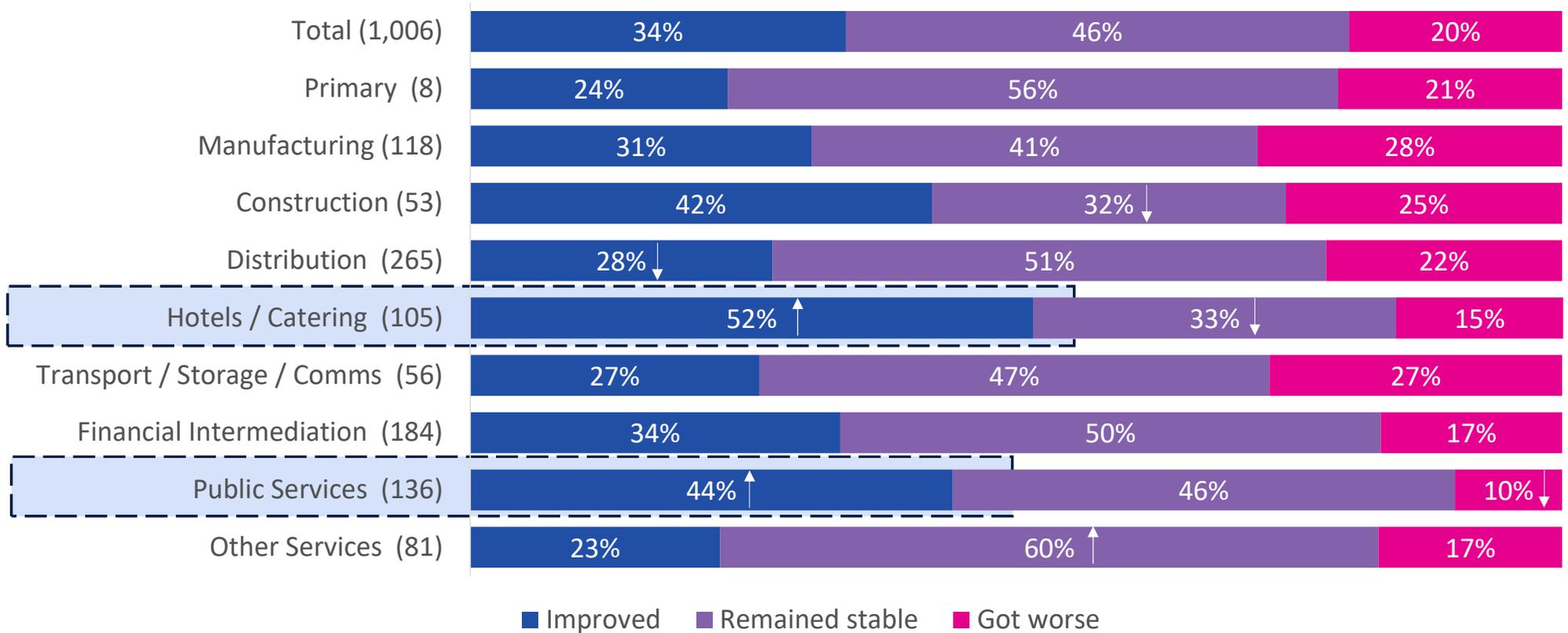
## Business performance in past 12 months

Medium/larger companies tend to have had a more positive performance.



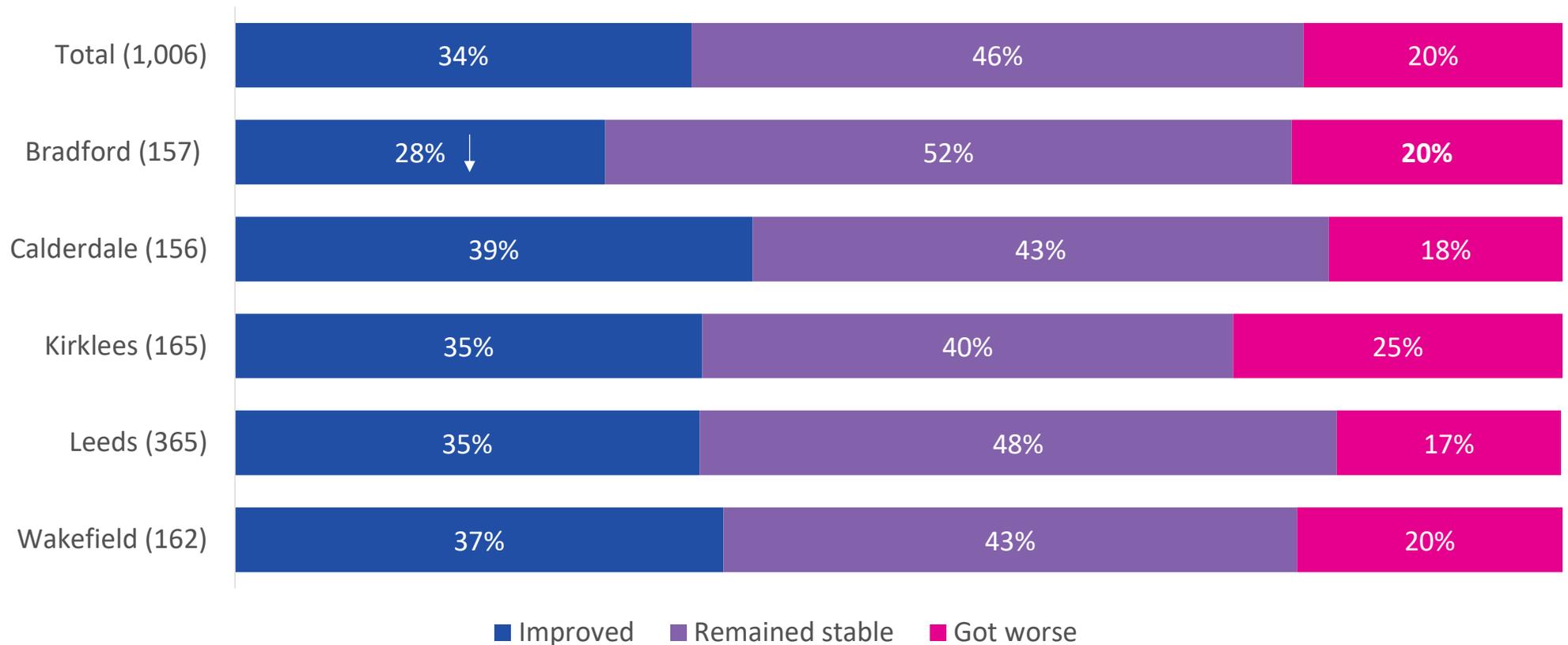
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## Business performance in past 12 months



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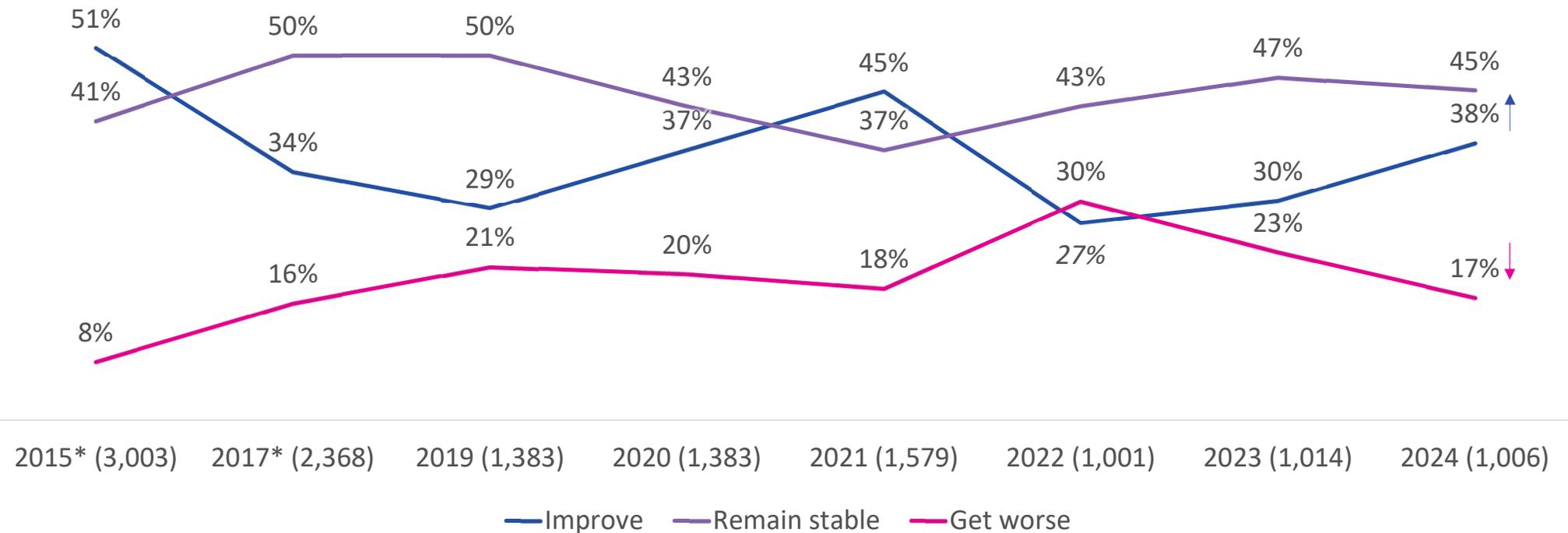
## Business performance in past 12 months



Q4. Would you say that overall, your business/organisation performance in the past 12 months has improved, remained stable or got worse? unweighted bases shown in brackets

## Business performance in next 12 months

Expectations of improvement have significantly increased to 38%, the highest levels since 2021, immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic.



Q5 Over the next 12 months do you expect the climate in which your business/organisation operates to generally improve, remain stable, or get worse? unweighted bases shown in brackets

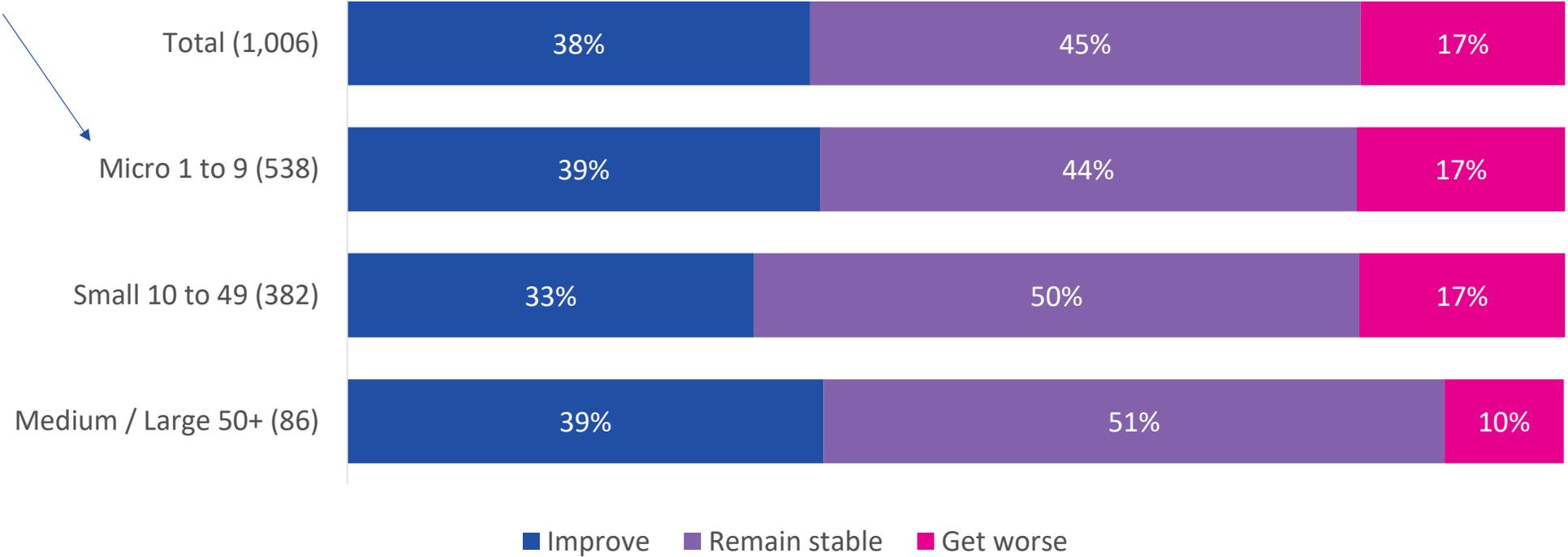


based on Leeds City region data  
Arrows indicate significant variations from the previous year at 95% confidence



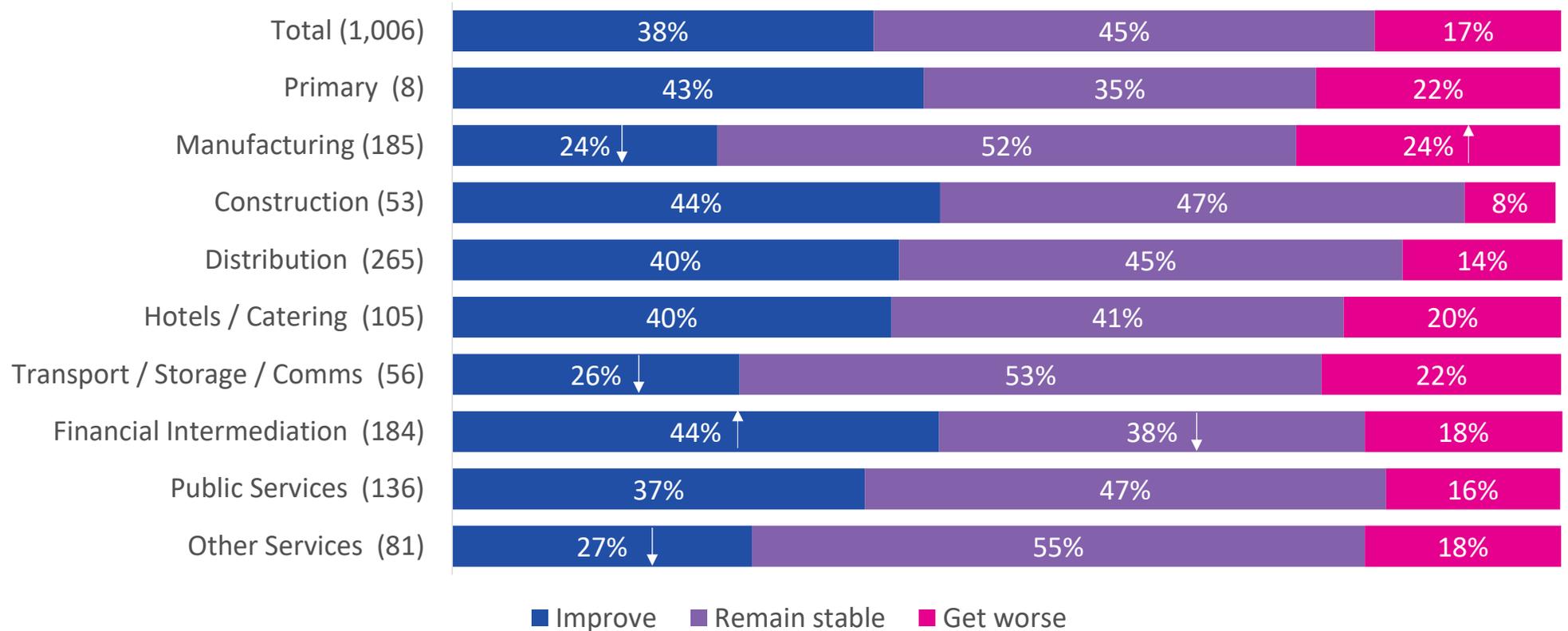
## Business performance in next 12 months

A third of micro businesses recorded improved performance in the last 12 months- more micro businesses are expecting growth in the coming year.



Q5 Over the next 12 months do you expect the climate in which your business/organisation operates to generally improve, remain stable, or get worse? unweighted bases shown in brackets

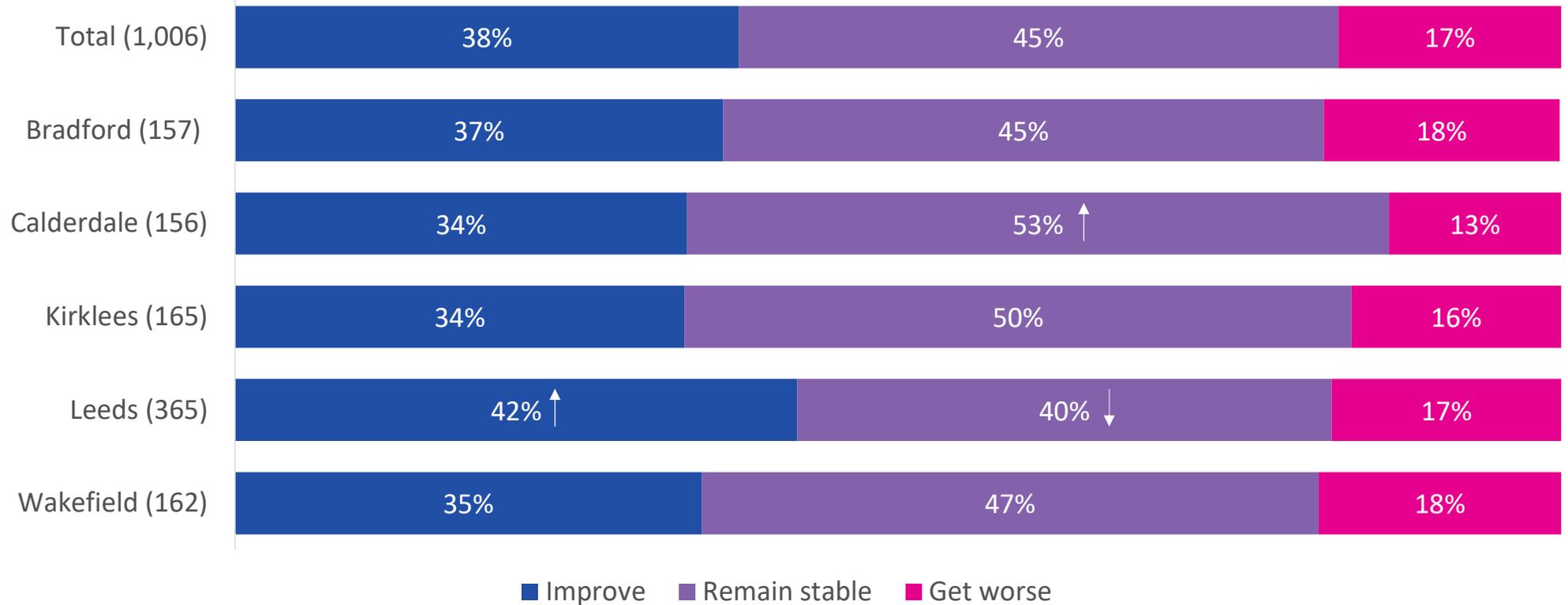
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## Business performance in next 12 months

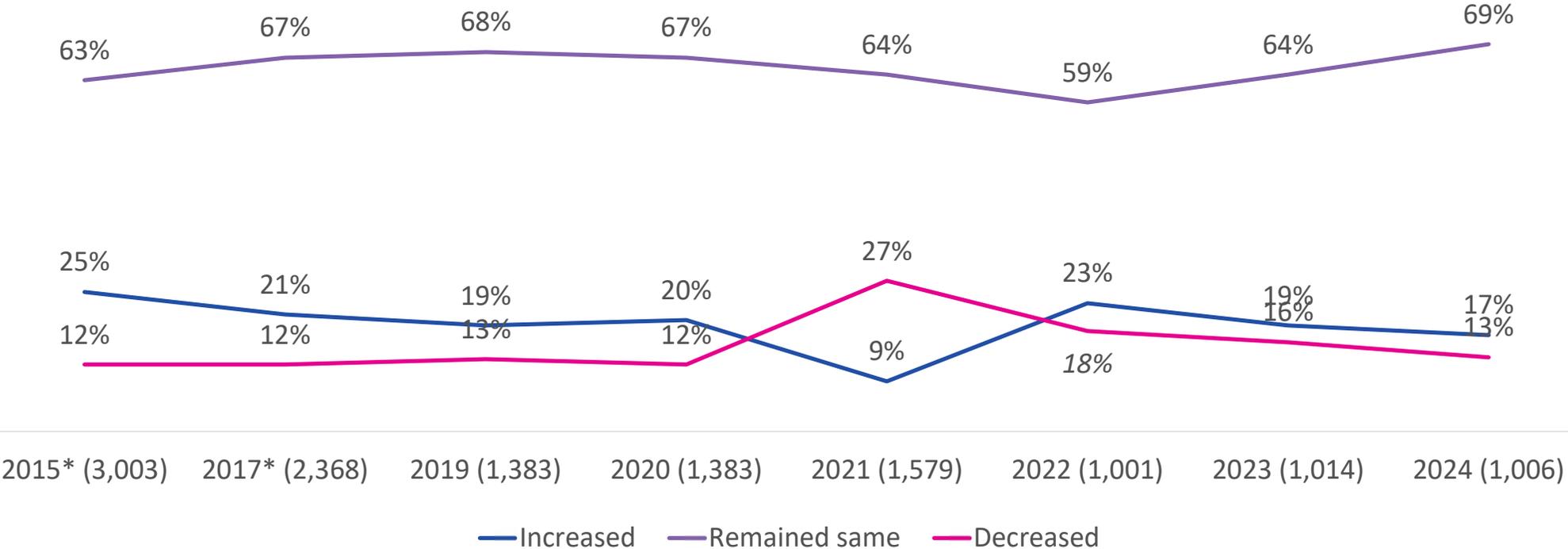
Over a third of business in all regions expect growth, but businesses in Leeds are especially likely to predict an improvement in performance.



Q5 Over the next 12 months do you expect the climate in which your business/organisation operates to generally improve, remain stable, or get worse? unweighted bases shown in brackets

# Workforce trends in past 12 months

Stability of the workforce has trended upwards since 2022, now sitting at the highest levels recorded.



Q6 Over the past 12 months has the number of people employed in your business/organisation increased, decreased or remained the same? unweighted bases shown in brackets



\* based on Leeds City region data



# Workforce trends in past 12 months

In 2023, 51% of medium/large companies saw growth in their workforce, compared to 29% in 2024. Therefore, the increasing stability is driven by these companies.



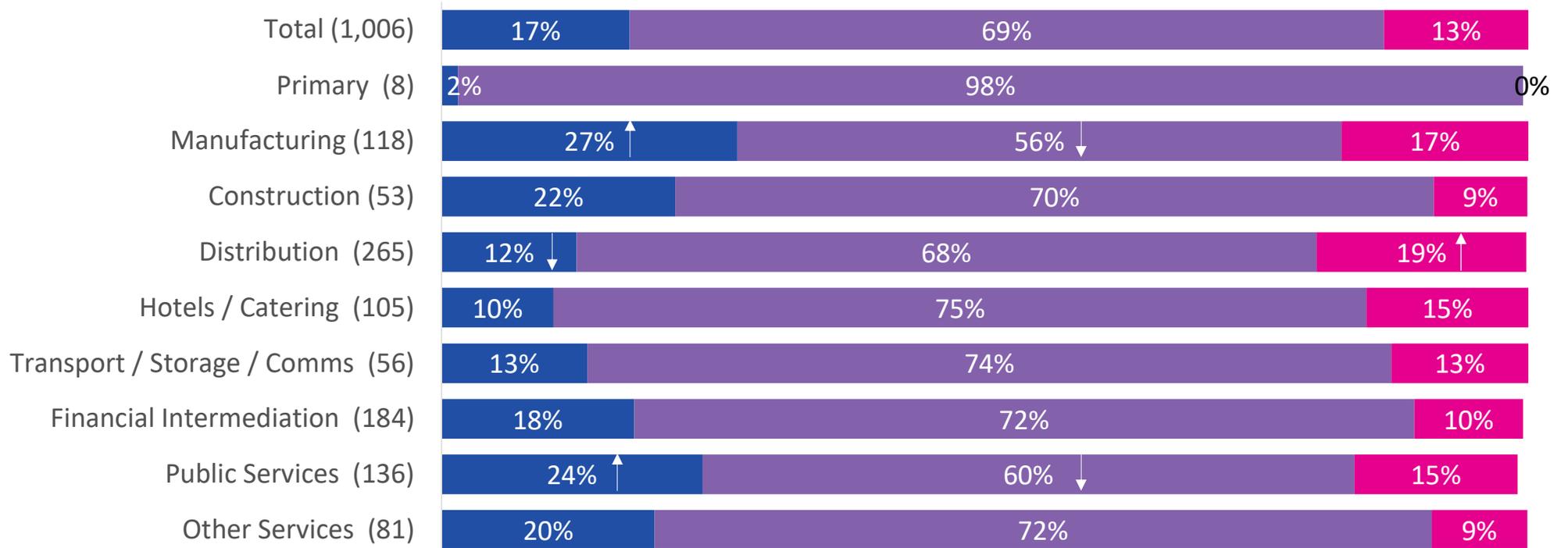
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Arrows indicate significant variations from the total at 95% confidence



## Workforce trends in past 12 months

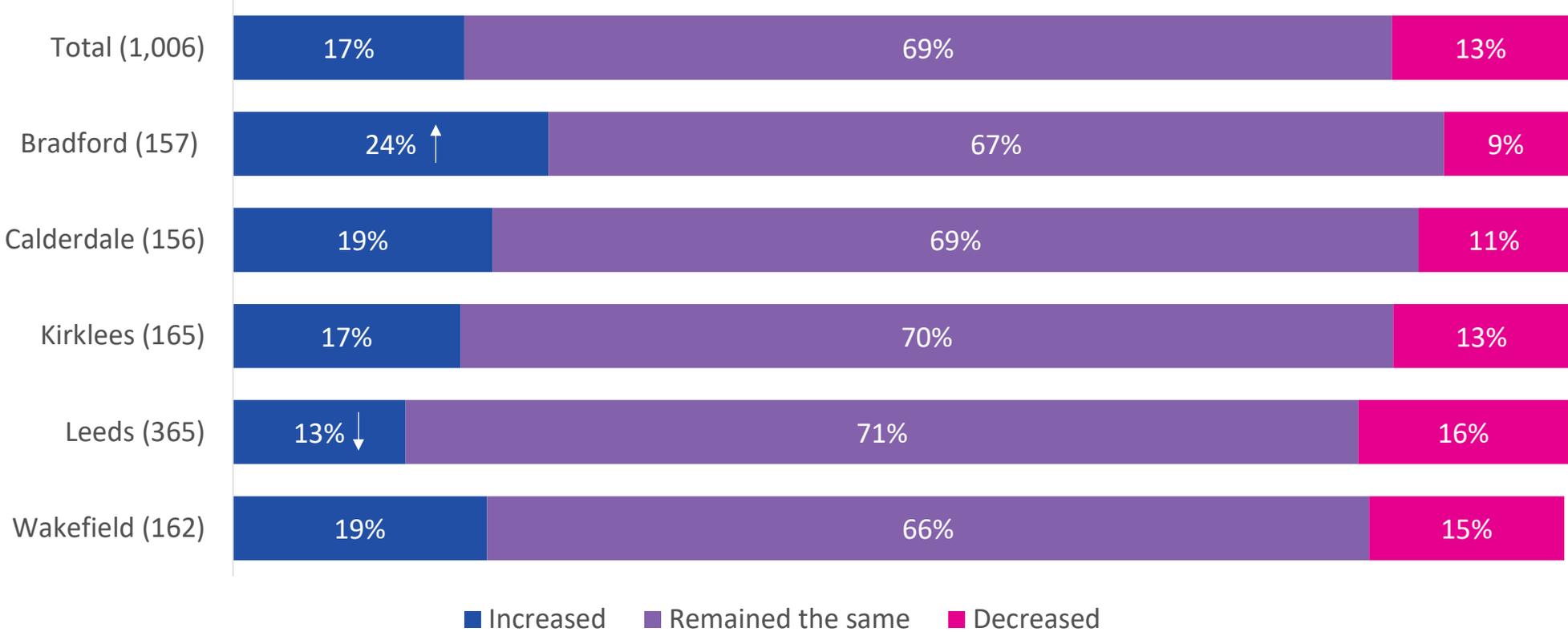


Hotel/Catering and Distribution are the only areas where the decrease figure is higher than the increase figure

■ Increased ■ Remained same ■ Decreased

Q6 Over the past 12 months has the number of people employed in your business/organisation increased, decreased or remained the same? unweighted bases shown in brackets

# Workforce trends in past 12 months



Q6 Over the past 12 months has the number of people employed in your business/organisation increased, decreased or remained the same? unweighted bases shown in brackets

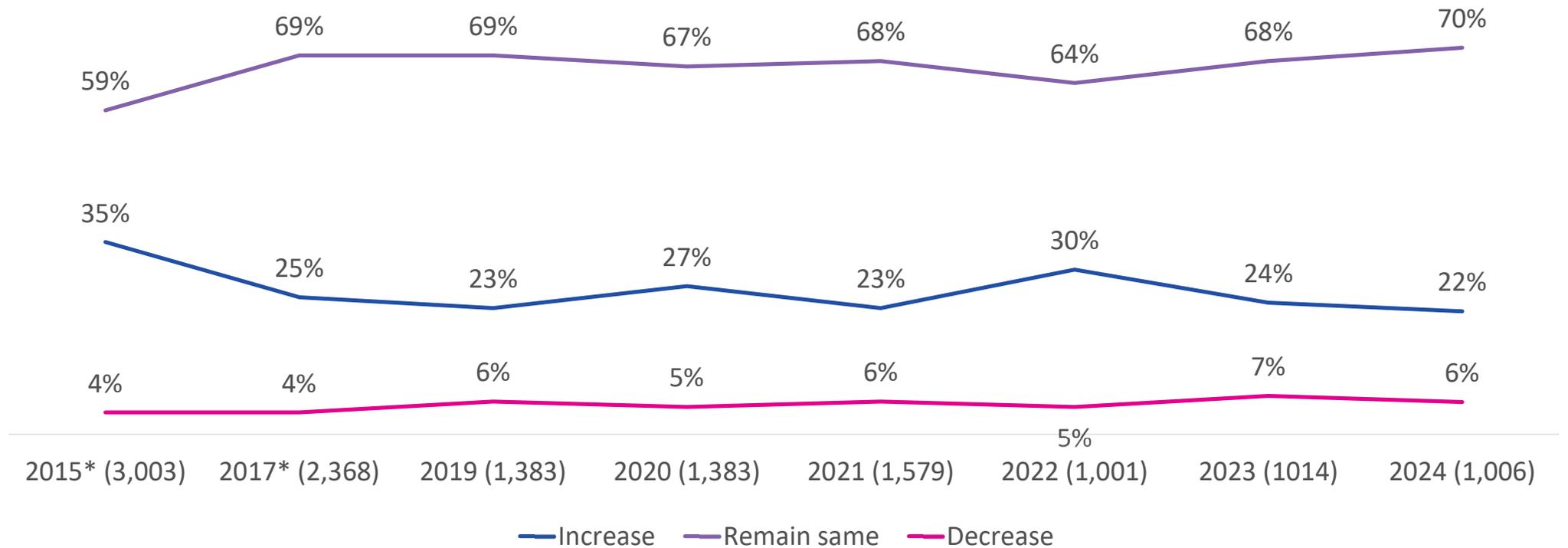


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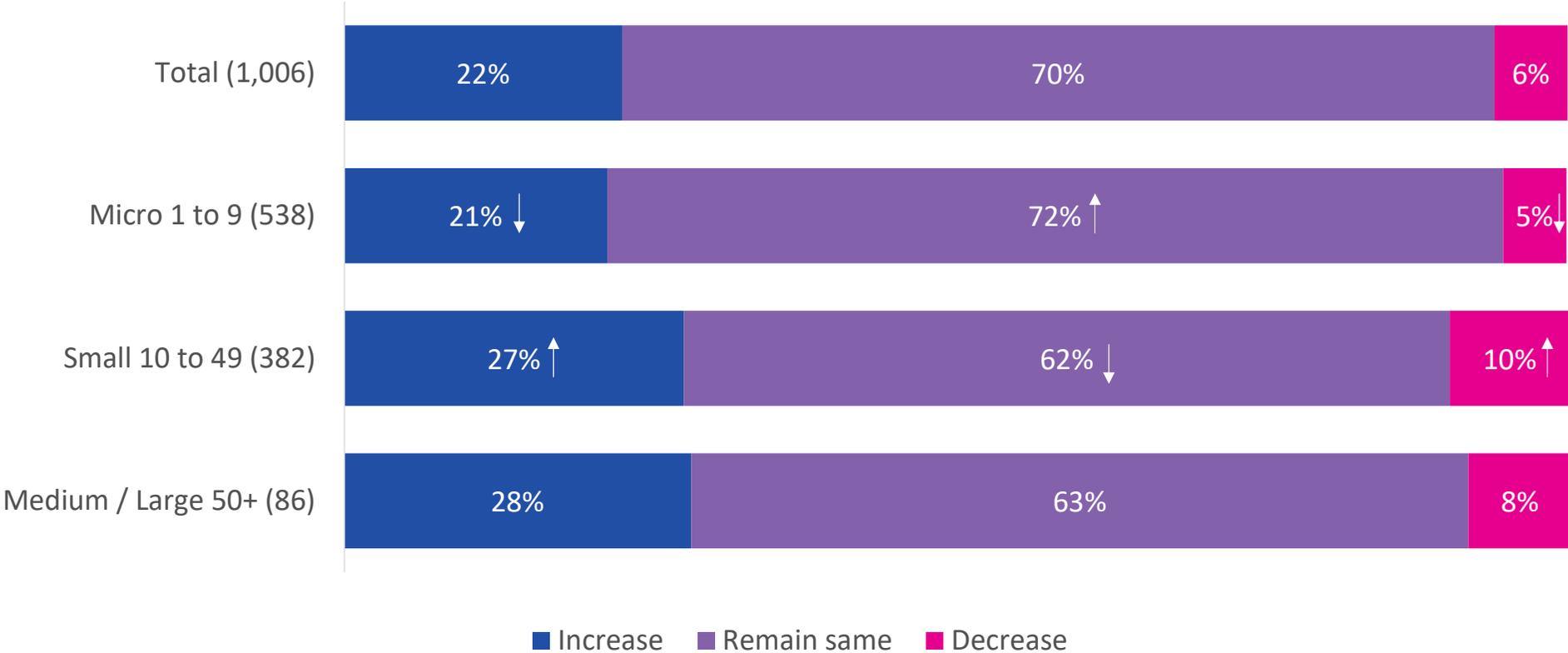
## Workforce trends in next 12 months

Businesses expect workforce stability to continue, with fewer than a quarter expecting growth. Whilst very few expect a reduction in workforce, this does tend to be an unplanned requirement.



Q7 Over the next 12 months do you expect the number of people employed in your business/organisation increase, decrease or remain the same? unweighted bases shown in brackets

# Workforce trends in next 12 months



Q7 Over the next 12 months do you expect the number of people employed in your business/organisation increase, decrease or remain the same? unweighted bases shown in brackets

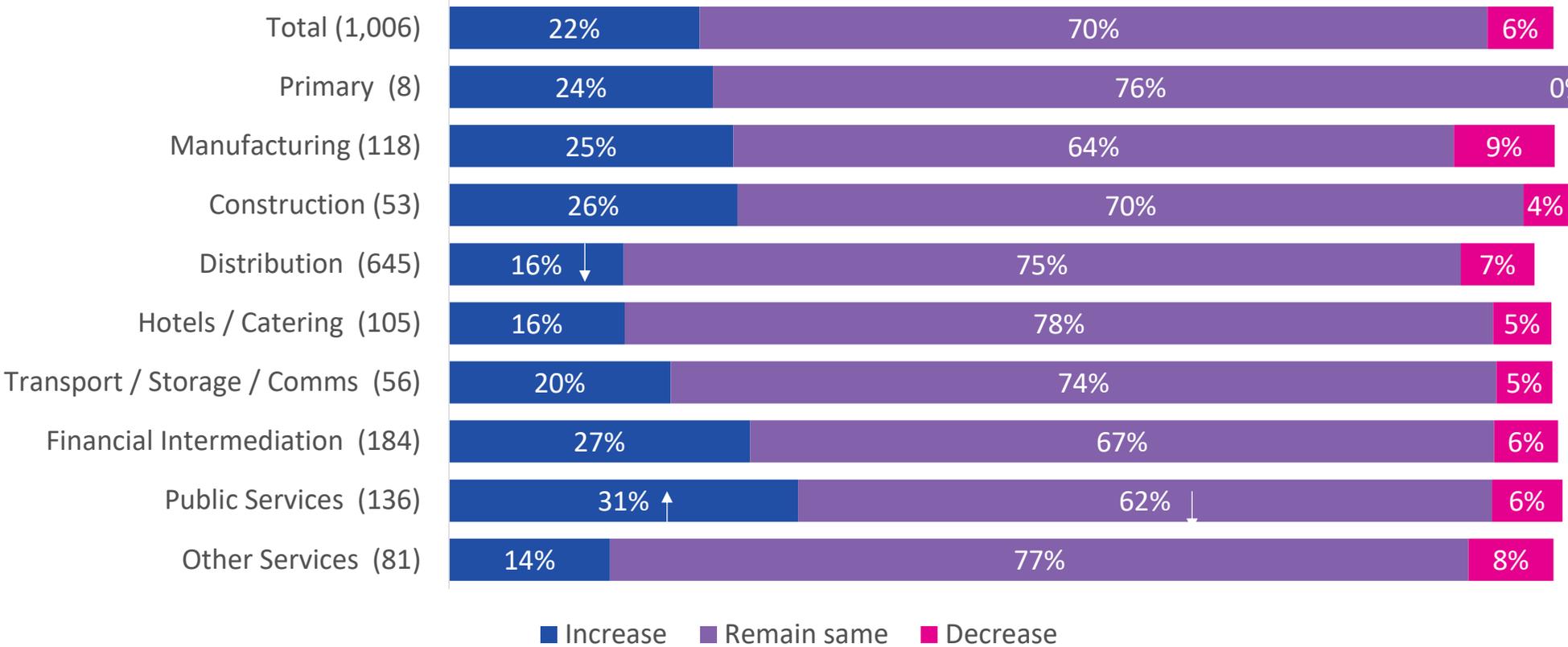


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# Workforce trends in next 12 months

The sector where workforces are most expected to increase is the public sector (31%)



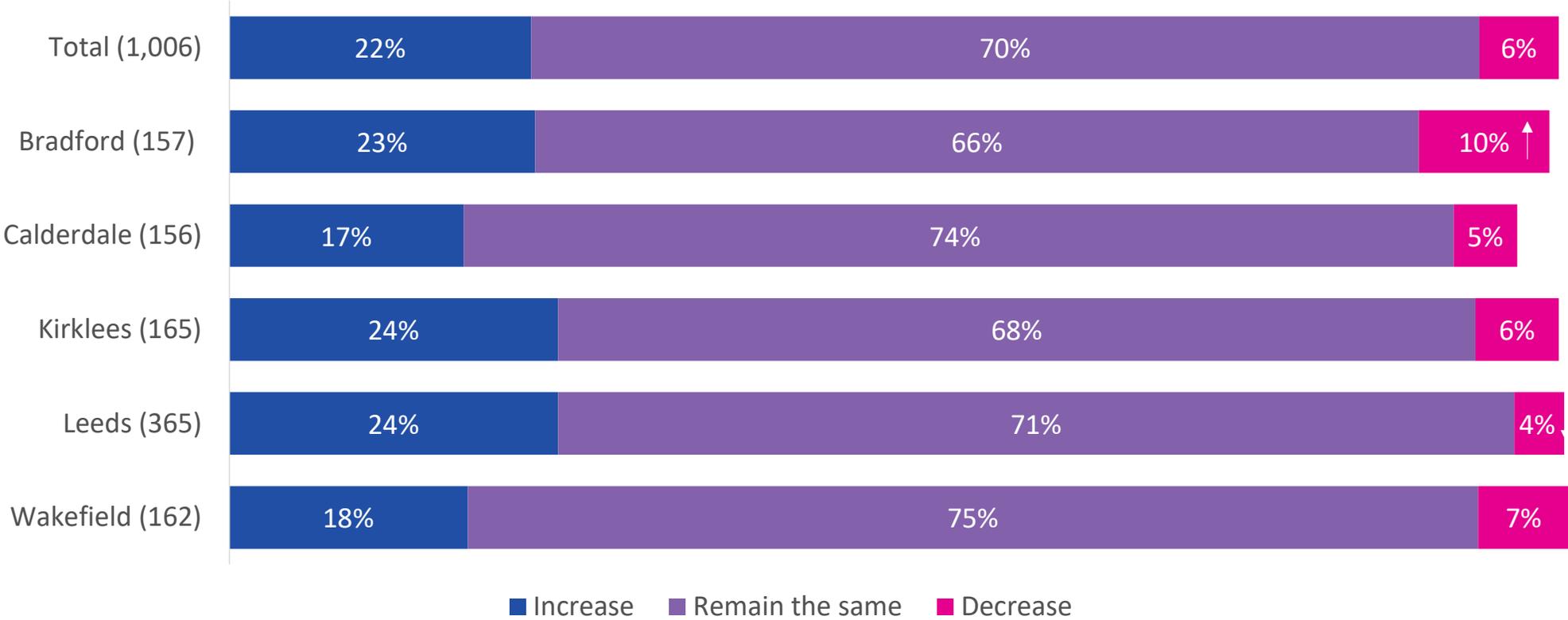
Q7. Over the next 12 months do you expect the number of people employed in your business/organisation to increase, decrease or remain the same? All respondents, unweighted bases shown in brackets



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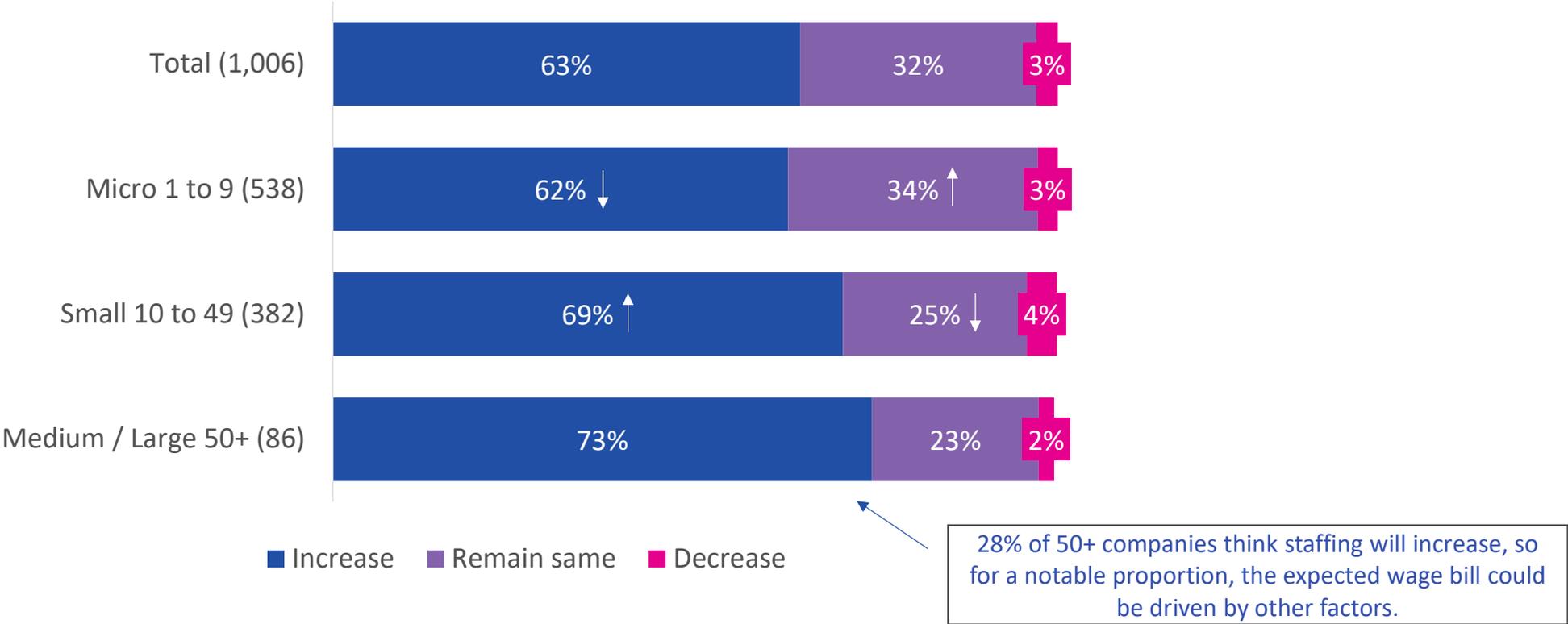
# Workforce trends in next 12 months



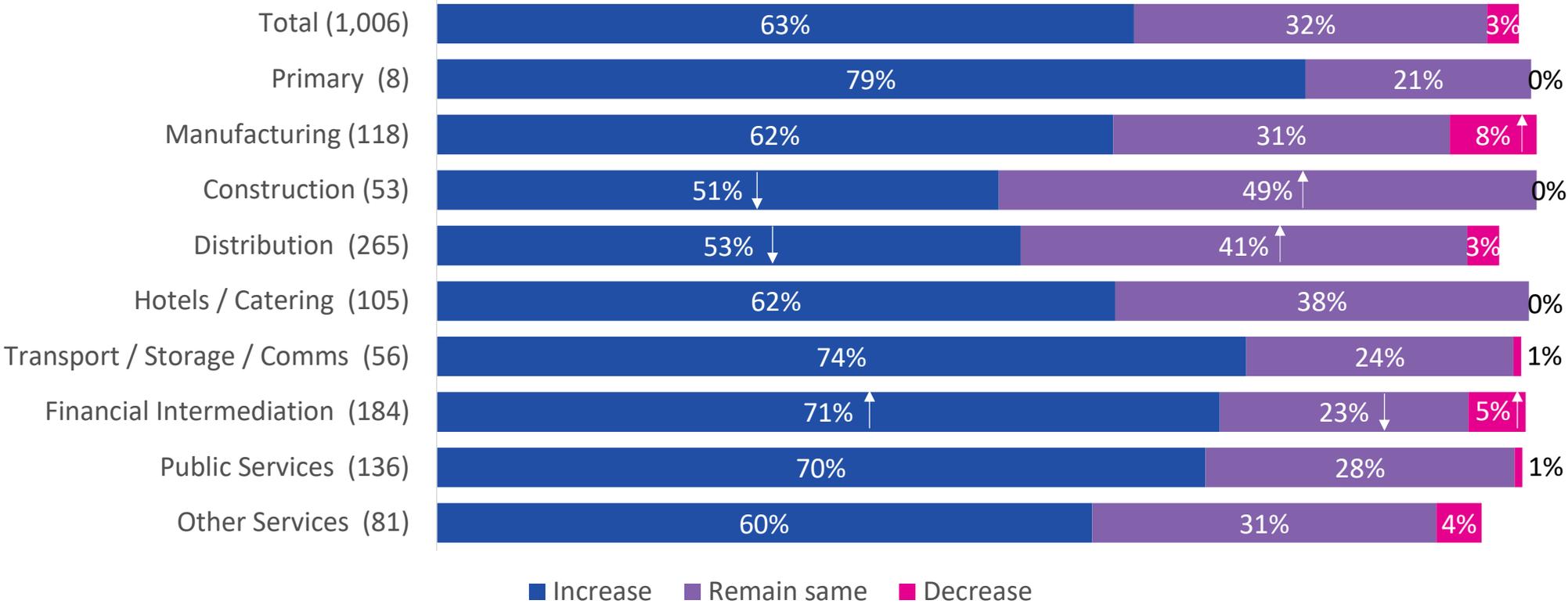
Q7. Over the next 12 months do you expect the number of people employed in your business/organisation to increase, decrease or remain the same? All respondents, unweighted bases shown in brackets

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# Wage bills over next 12 months



# Wage bills over next 12 months



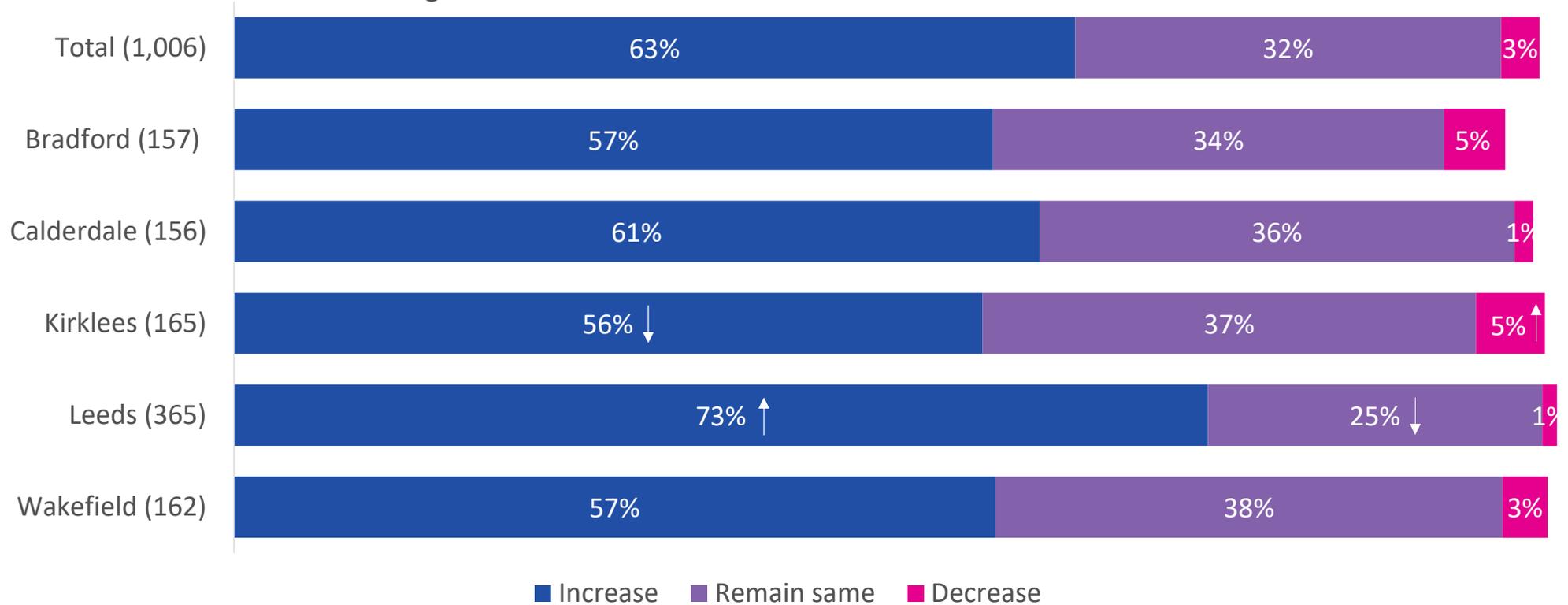
Q8. Over the next 12 months do you expect your business/organisation's wage bill to increase, decrease or remain the same. All respondents, unweighted bases shown in brackets

Arrows indicate significant variations from the total at 95% confidence



## Wage bills over next 12 months

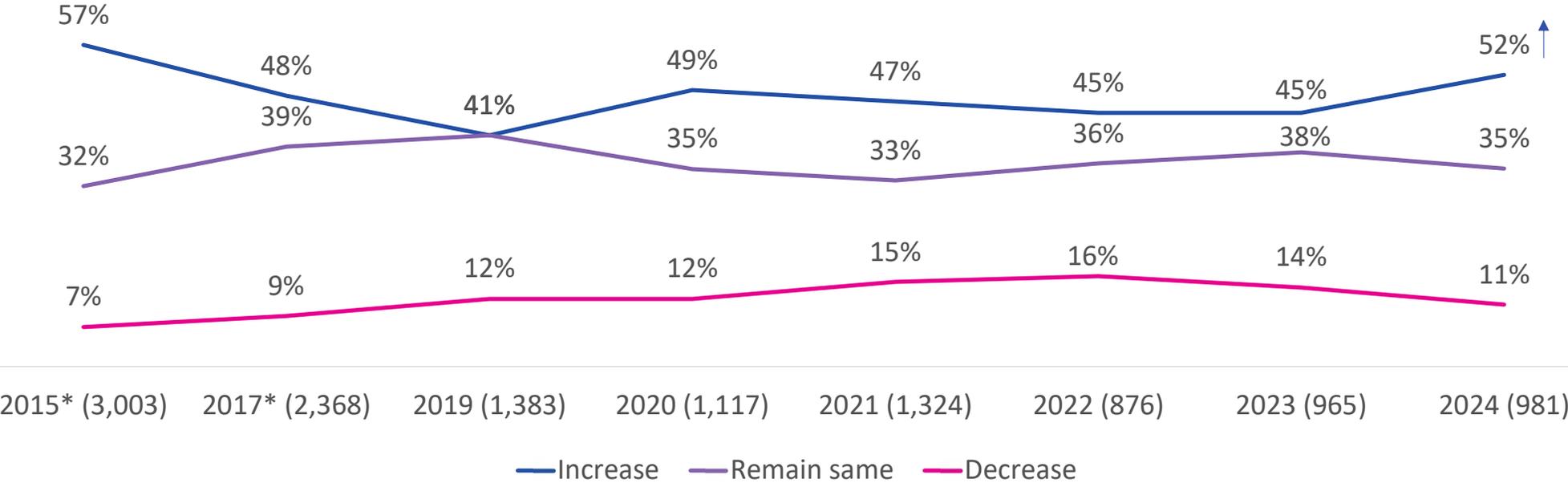
Businesses in Leeds expect the greatest increase in wage bills, although their expectations of workforce stability are consistent with the rest of the region.



Q8. Over the next 12 months do you expect your business/organisation's wage bill to increase, decrease or remain the same. All respondents, unweighted bases shown in brackets

# Trends in turnover in next 12 months

Following an uplift in 2024, half of businesses (52%) surveyed now expect turnover to increase in the next 12 months, the largest proportion since 2015\*



\* based on Leeds City region data

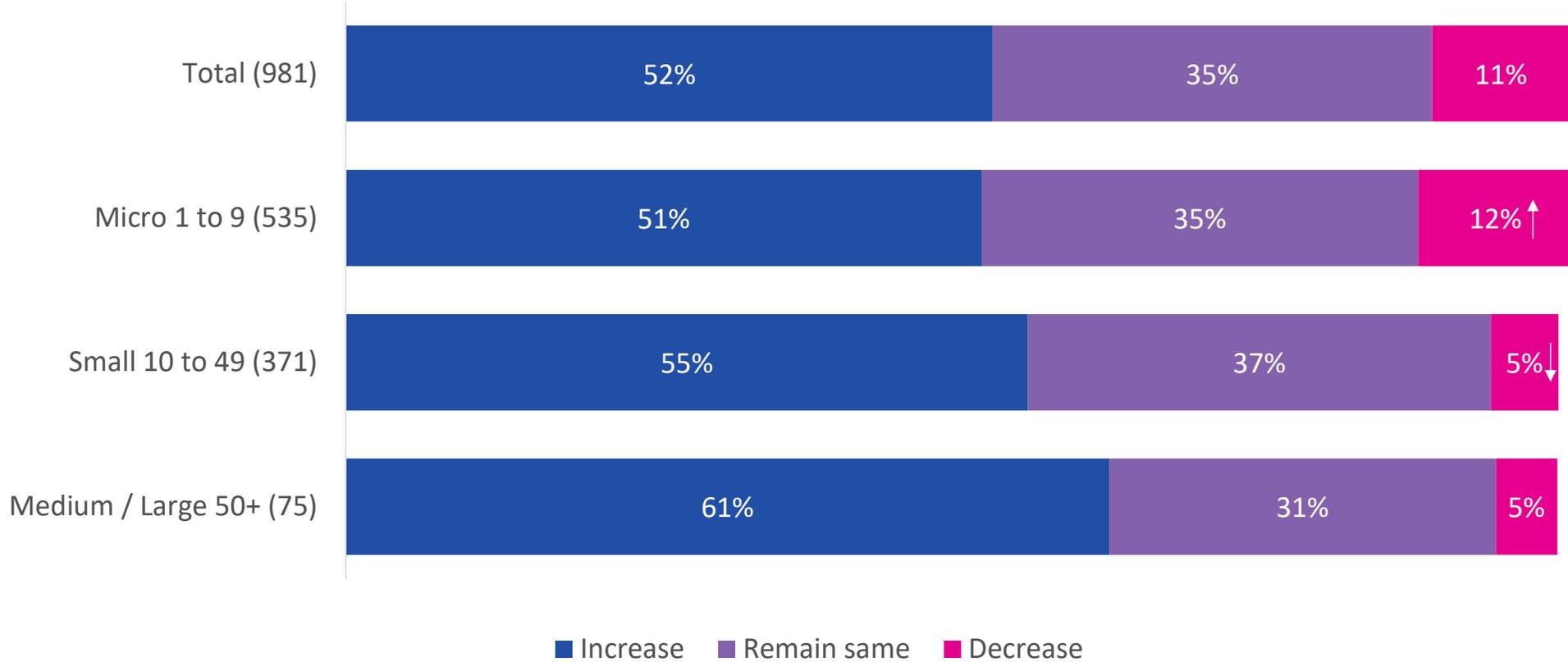


Q10. Over the next 12 months do you expect your business/organisation turnover to increase, decrease or remain the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

Arrows indicate significant variations from the previous year at 95% confidence



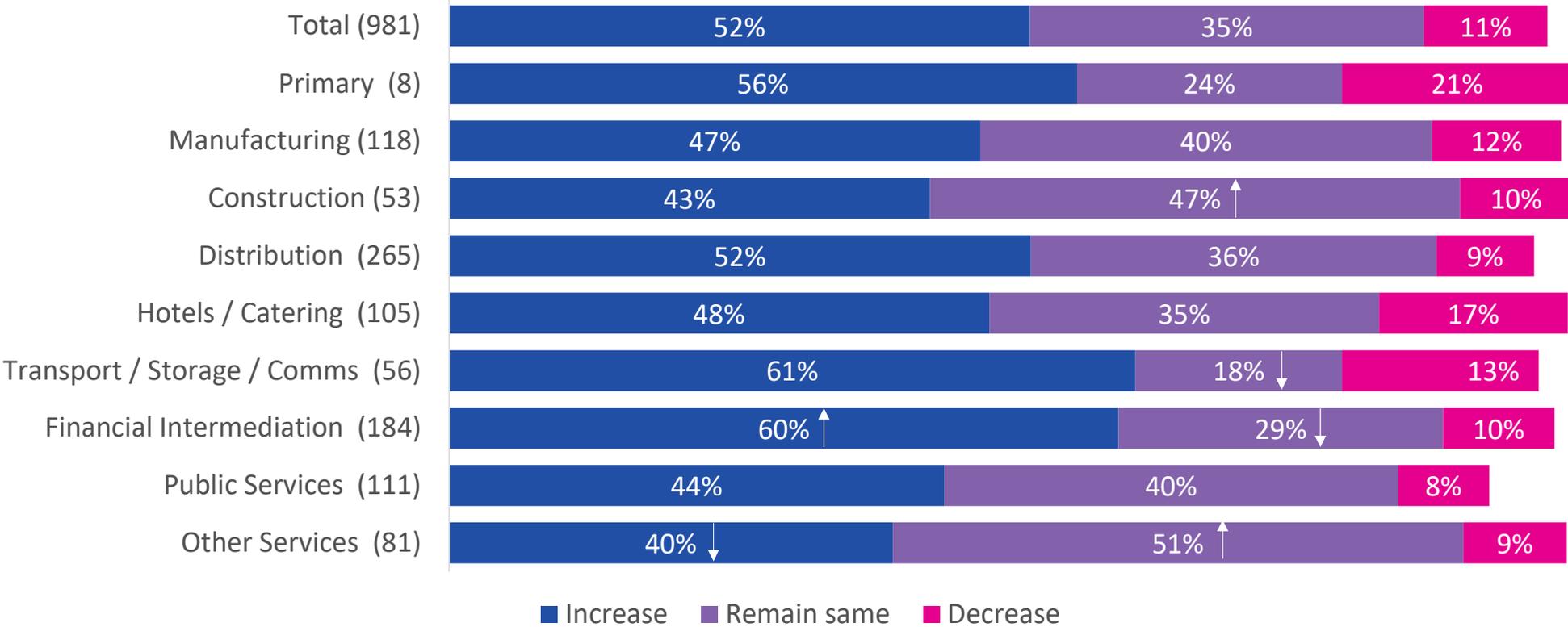
# Trends in turnover in next 12 months



Q10. Over the next 12 months do you expect your business/organisation turnover to increase, decrease or remain the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

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# Trends in turnover in next 12 months



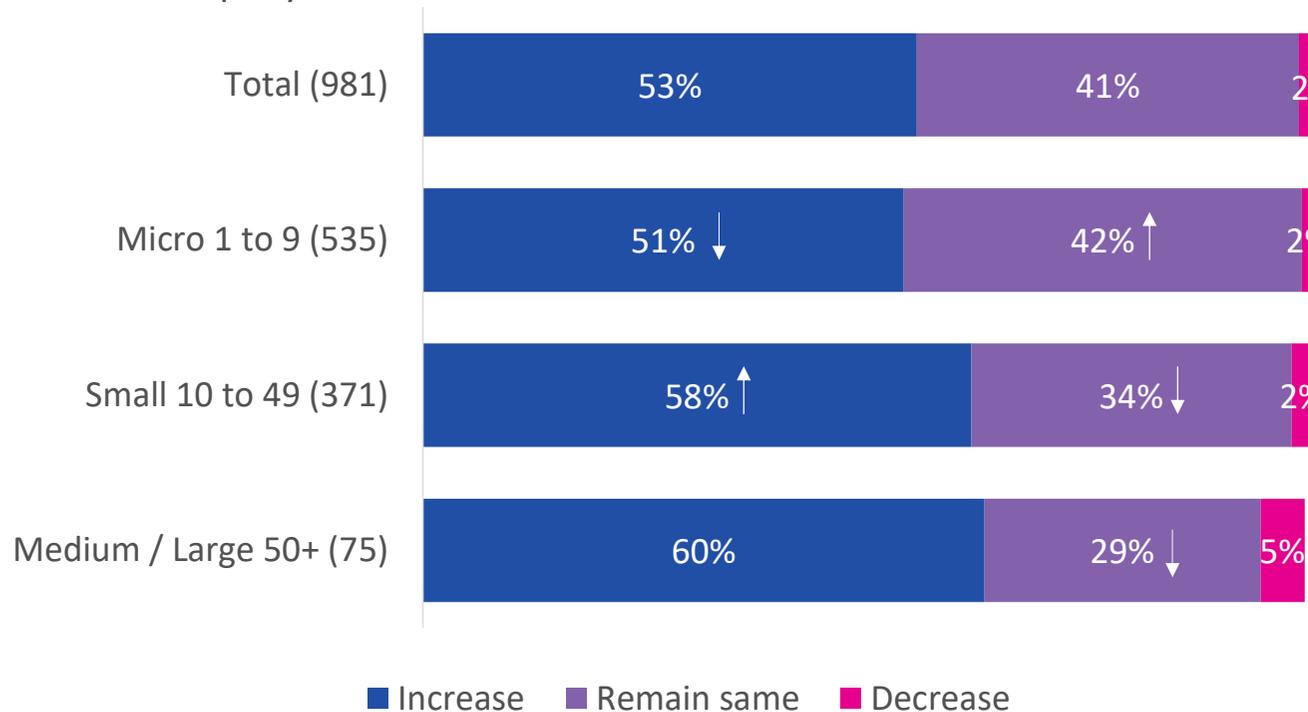
Q10. Over the next 12 months do you expect your business/organisation turnover to increase, decrease or remain the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

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## Prices charged to customers over next 12 months

Around half of businesses expect prices charged to customers to increase, and the likelihood of this is greater as the size of the company increases.

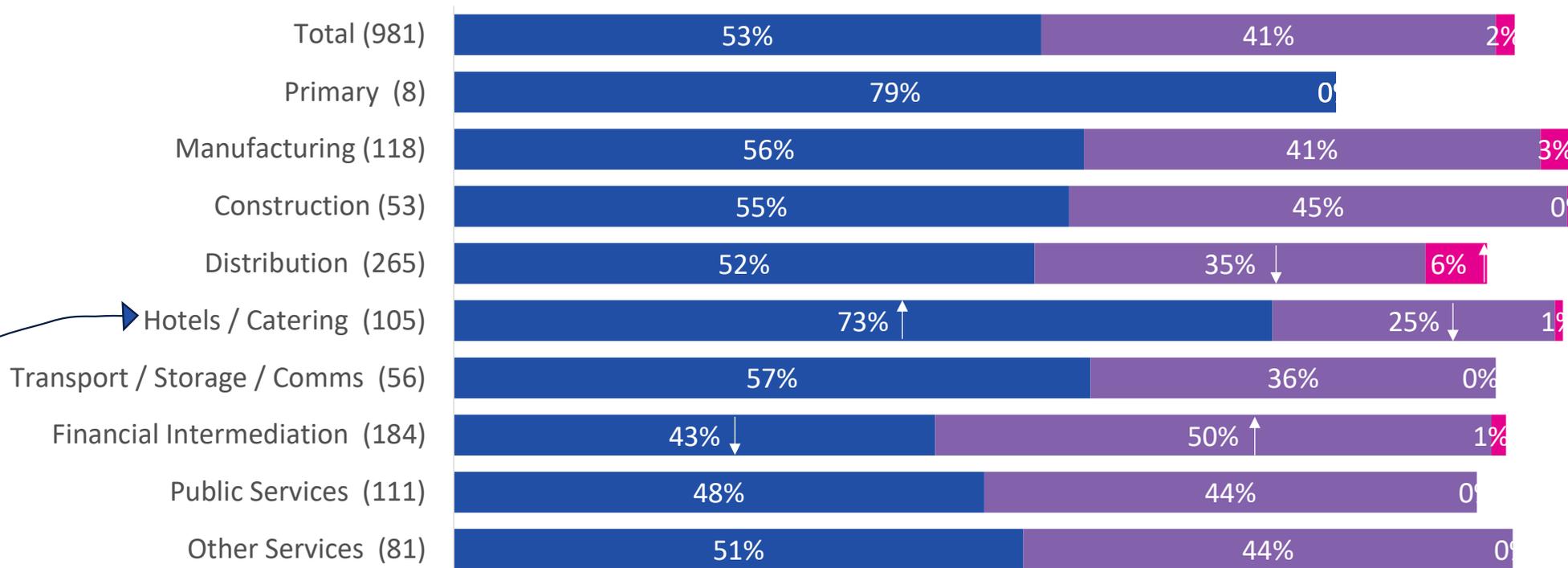


Where expecting an increase:

- 88% by up to 10%
- 8% by 11% to 20%
- 2% by 21% to 50%
- 3% did not know

Q10b. Over the next 12 months do you expect the price(s) you charge to your customers to increase, decrease or remain the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

## Prices charged to customers over next 12 months



■ Increase ■ Remain same ■ Decrease

The Hotels/ Catering industry is significantly more likely to expect to charge customers more. This has increased from **67%** in 2022.

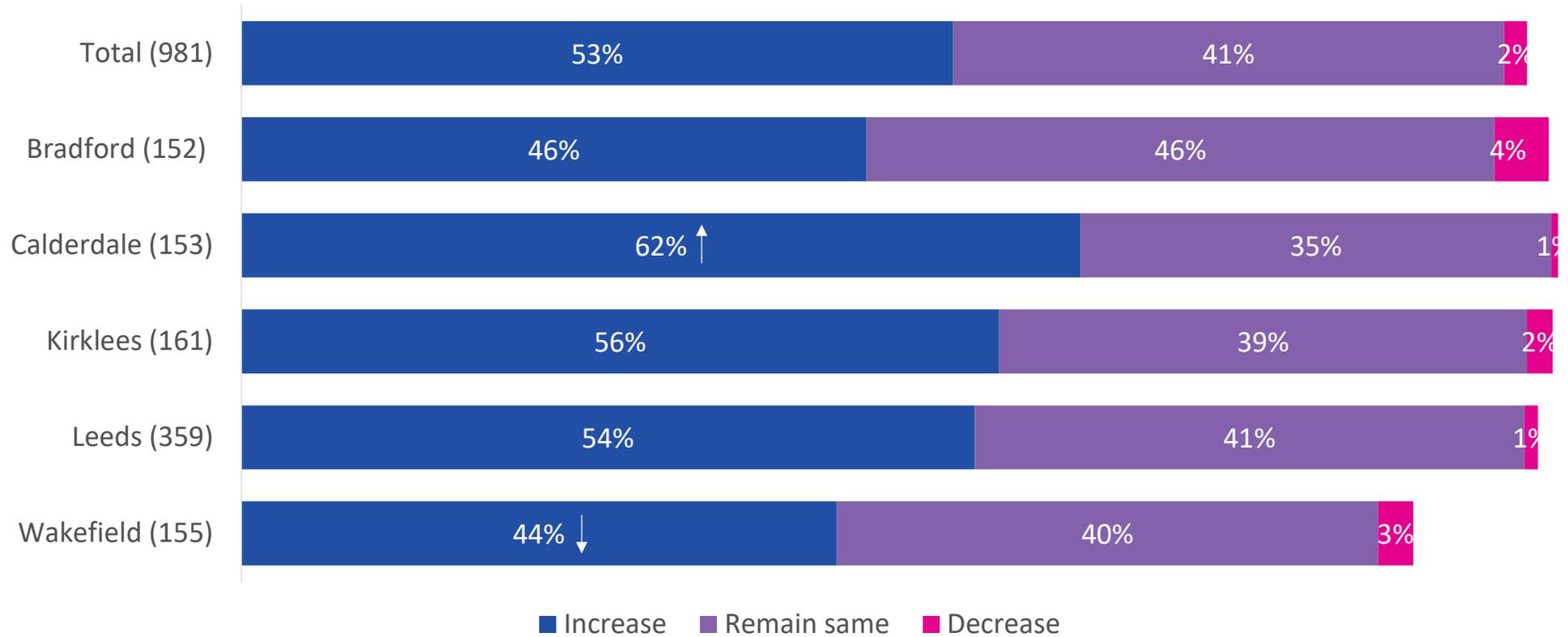


Q10b. Over the next 12 months do you expect the price(s) you charge to your customers to increase, decrease or remain the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

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## Prices charged to customers over next 12 months

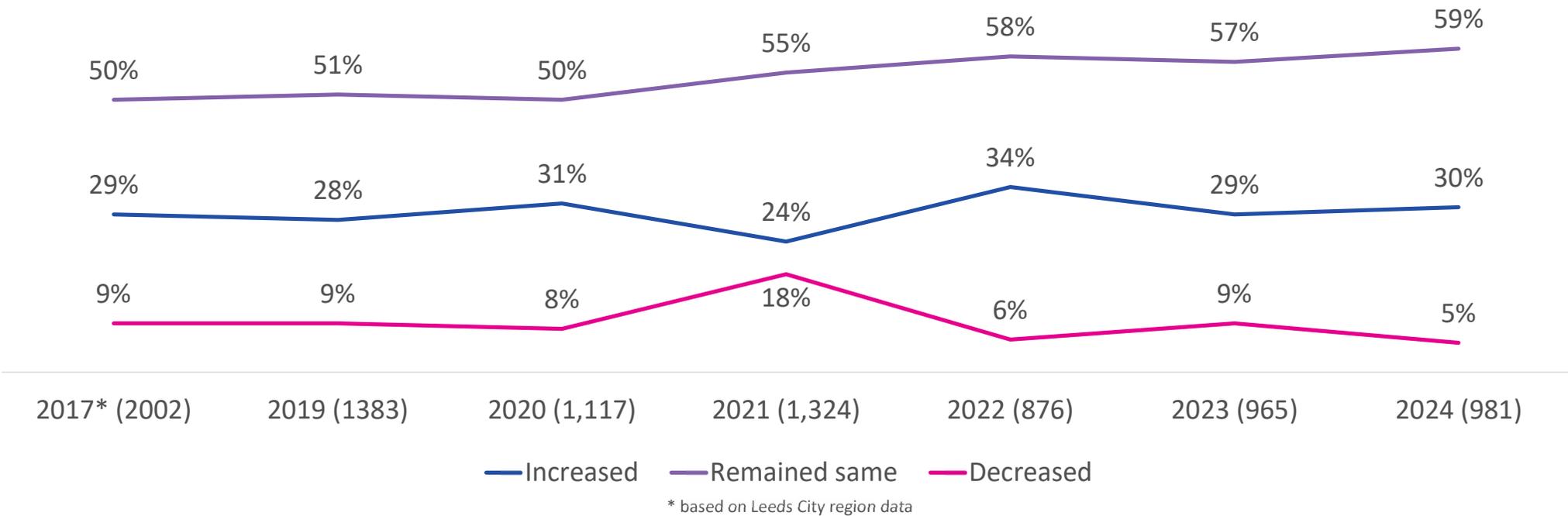


Q10b. Over the next 12 months do you expect the price(s) you charge to your customers to increase, decrease or remain the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

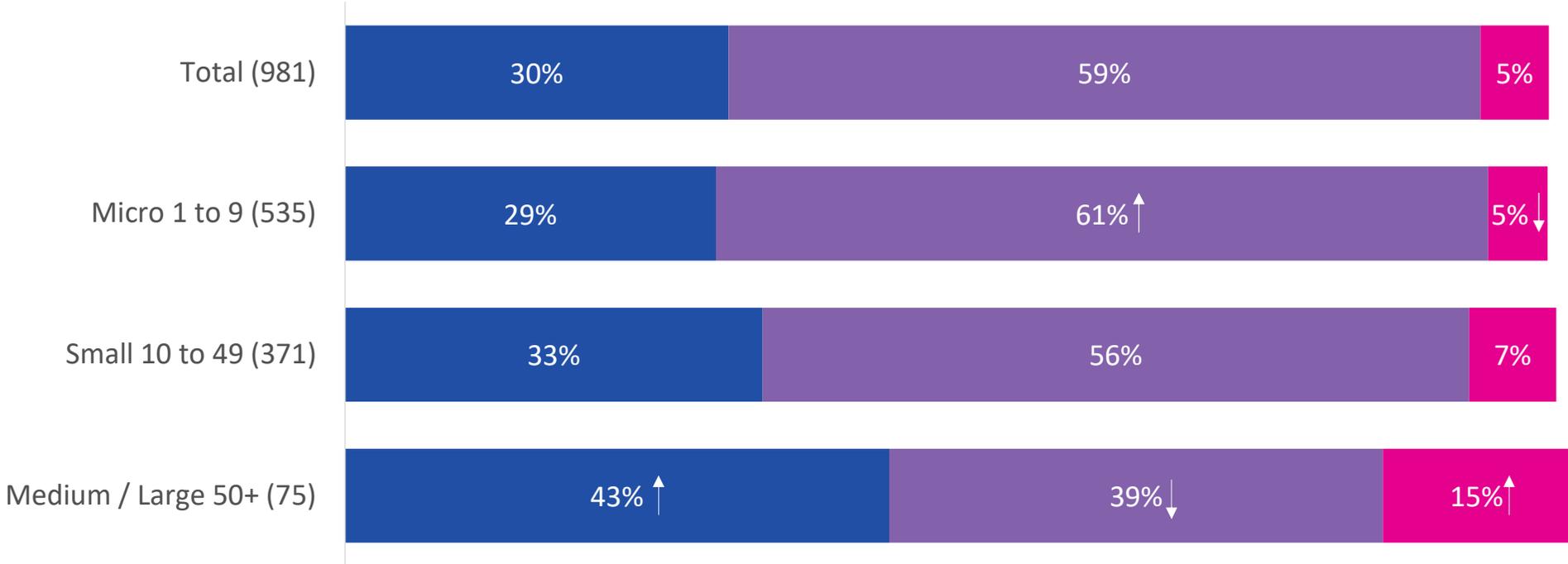
Arrows indicate significant variations from the total at 95% confidence

# Trend in investment in past 12 months

Investment levels show signs of stabilising at pre-2021 levels, with a small proportion predicting a decrease.



# Trends in investment in past 12 months



Investment among medium/large companies down from 61% in 2023.

■ Increased ■ Remained same ■ Decreased

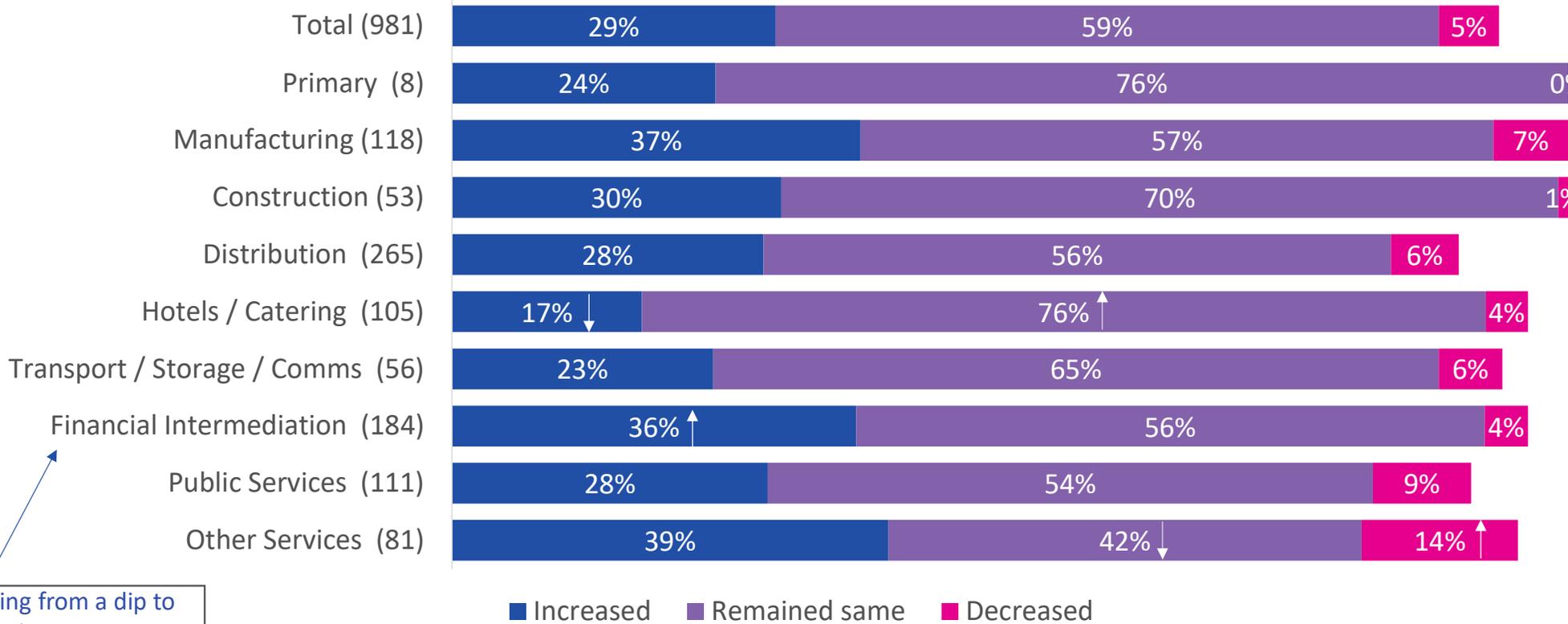


Q11. Overall, in the past 12 months has investment in the business/organisation increased, decreased or remained the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

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# Trends in investment in past 12 months



Recovering from a dip to 24% in 2023

Q11. Overall, in the past 12 months has investment in the business/organisation increased, decreased or remained the same? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

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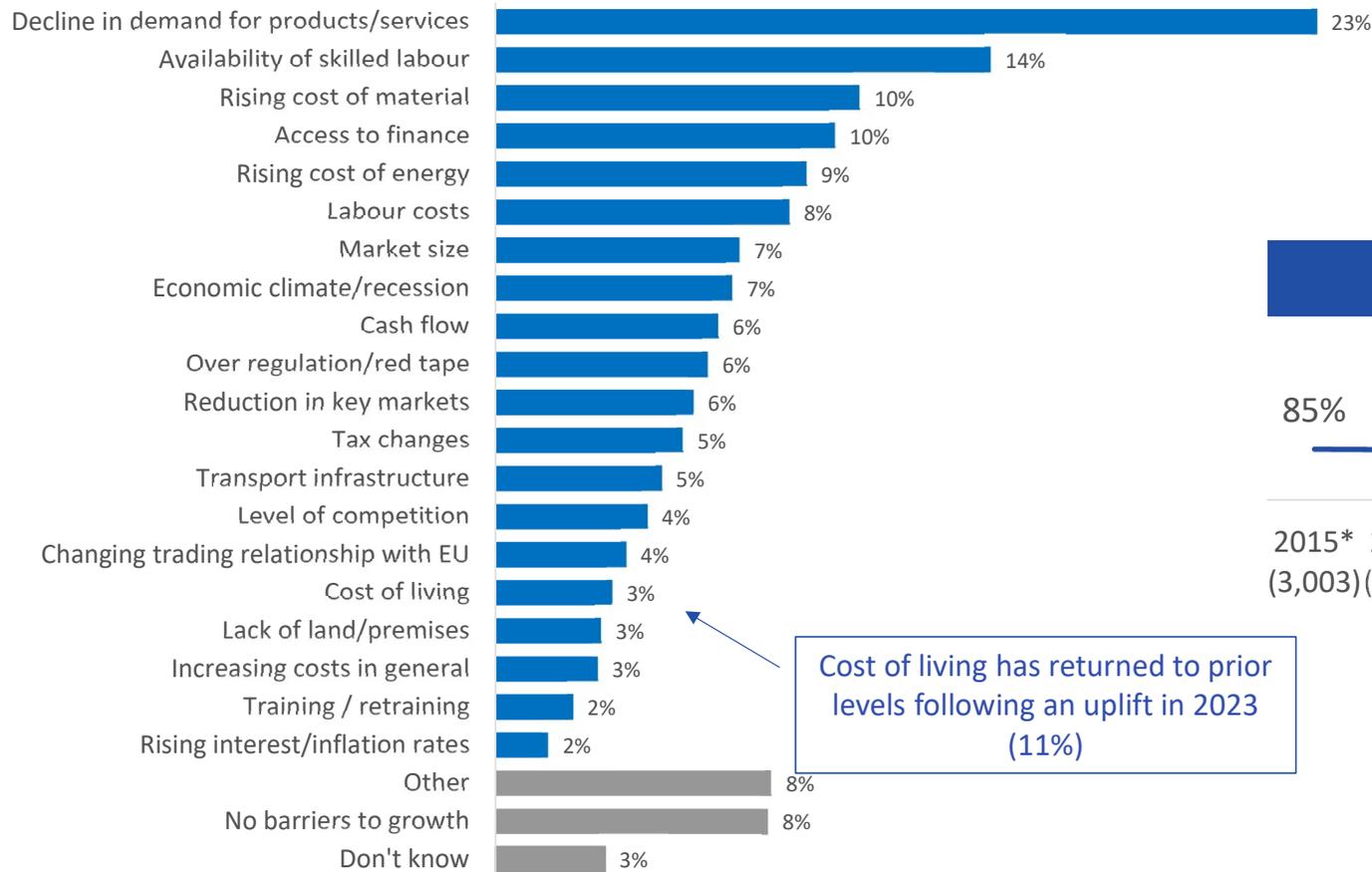


# Barriers to growth

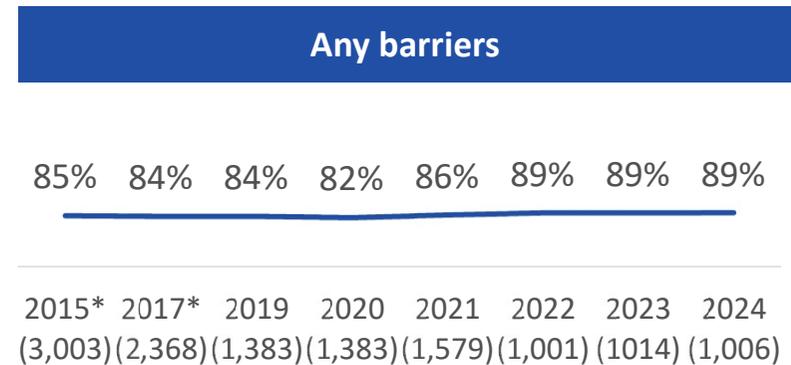
## Barriers to growth – summary

- Close to nine in ten businesses (89%) identify barriers to growth in the next 3 years. This reflects a stabilization of the upwards trend recorded between 2020 and 2023.
- Decline in demand for products/services remains the most cited barrier (23%), followed by availability of skilled labour (14%).

## Barriers to growth in next 3 years



Cost of living has returned to prior levels following an uplift in 2023 (11%)



## Barriers to growth in next 3 years

	Biggest barrier	2 <sup>nd</sup> biggest barrier	3 <sup>rd</sup> biggest barrier
Total (1,006)	Decline in demand for products/services	Availability of skilled labour	Rising cost of material
Micro 1 to 9 (538)	Decline in demand for products/services	Availability of skilled labour	Rising cost of material
Small 10 to 49 (382)	Availability of skilled labour	Decline in demand for products/services	Access to finance
Medium/Large 50+ (86)	Availability of skilled labour	Access to finance	Rising cost of material
Primary (8)	Over regulation/red tape	Access to finance/ Rising cost of material/ decline in demand for products and services/ Transport infrastructure/ Increasing costs in general/ Environmental impact/climate change	Availability of skilled labour/ Changing trading relationship with EU
Manufacturing (118)	Decline in demand for products/services	Rising cost of material/ Availability of skilled labour	Tax changes
Construction (53)	Decline in demand for products/services	Availability of skilled labour	Market size
Distribution (265)	Decline in demand for products/services	Rising cost of material	Rising cost of energy
Hotels/Catering (105)	Decline in demand for products/services	Rising cost of energy	Rising cost of material
Transport/Storage/Comms (56)	Decline in demand for products/services	Reduction in key markets	Market size
Financial Intermediation (266)	Decline in demand for products/services	Availability of skilled labour	Economic climate/recession
Public Services (136)	Access to finance	Availability of skilled labour	Decline in demand for products/services
Other Services (81)	Access to finance	Decline in demand for products/services	Availability of skilled labour

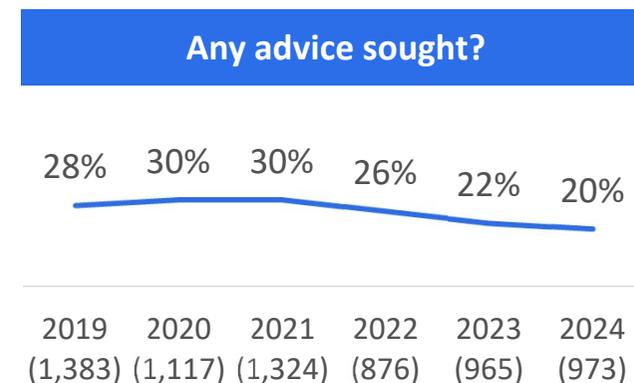
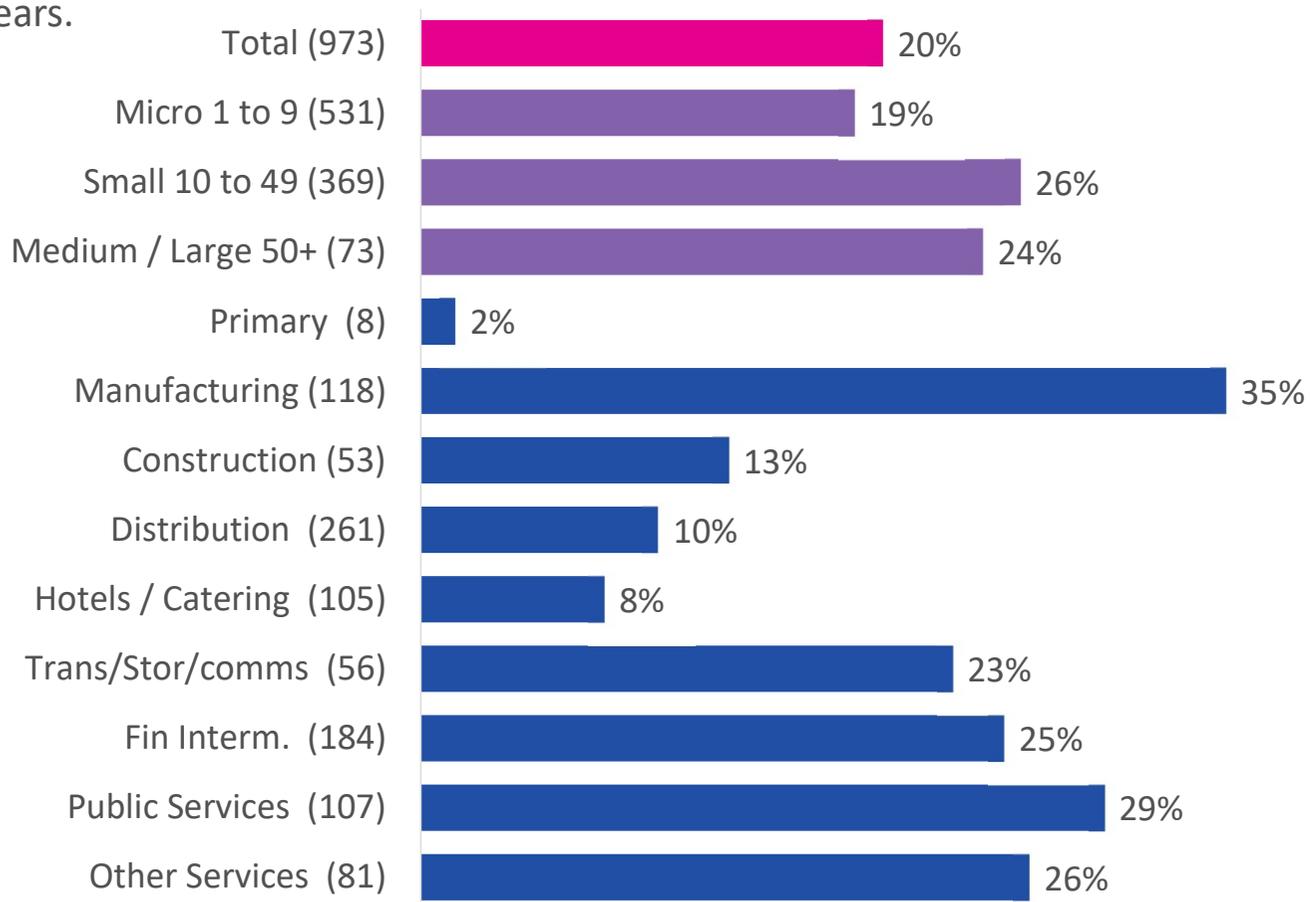
# Business support

## Business support – summary

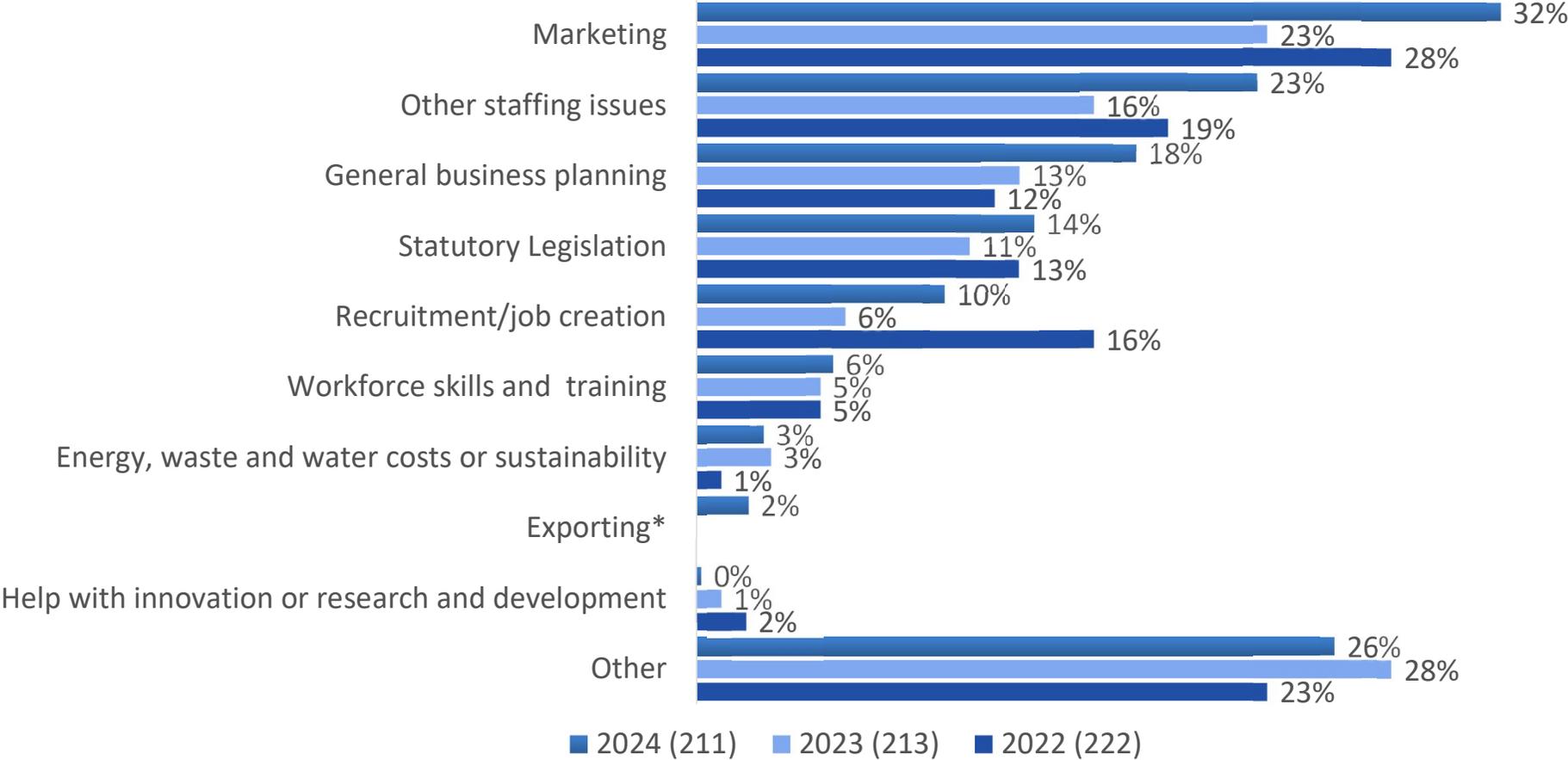
- The number of organisations who have sought advice in the last 24 months has trended downwards over the past 4 years, from 30% in 2021 to 20% this year.
- The most prevalent areas in which businesses have sought advice are in marketing (32%), staffing issues (23%), and general business planning (18%).

## Business support – summary

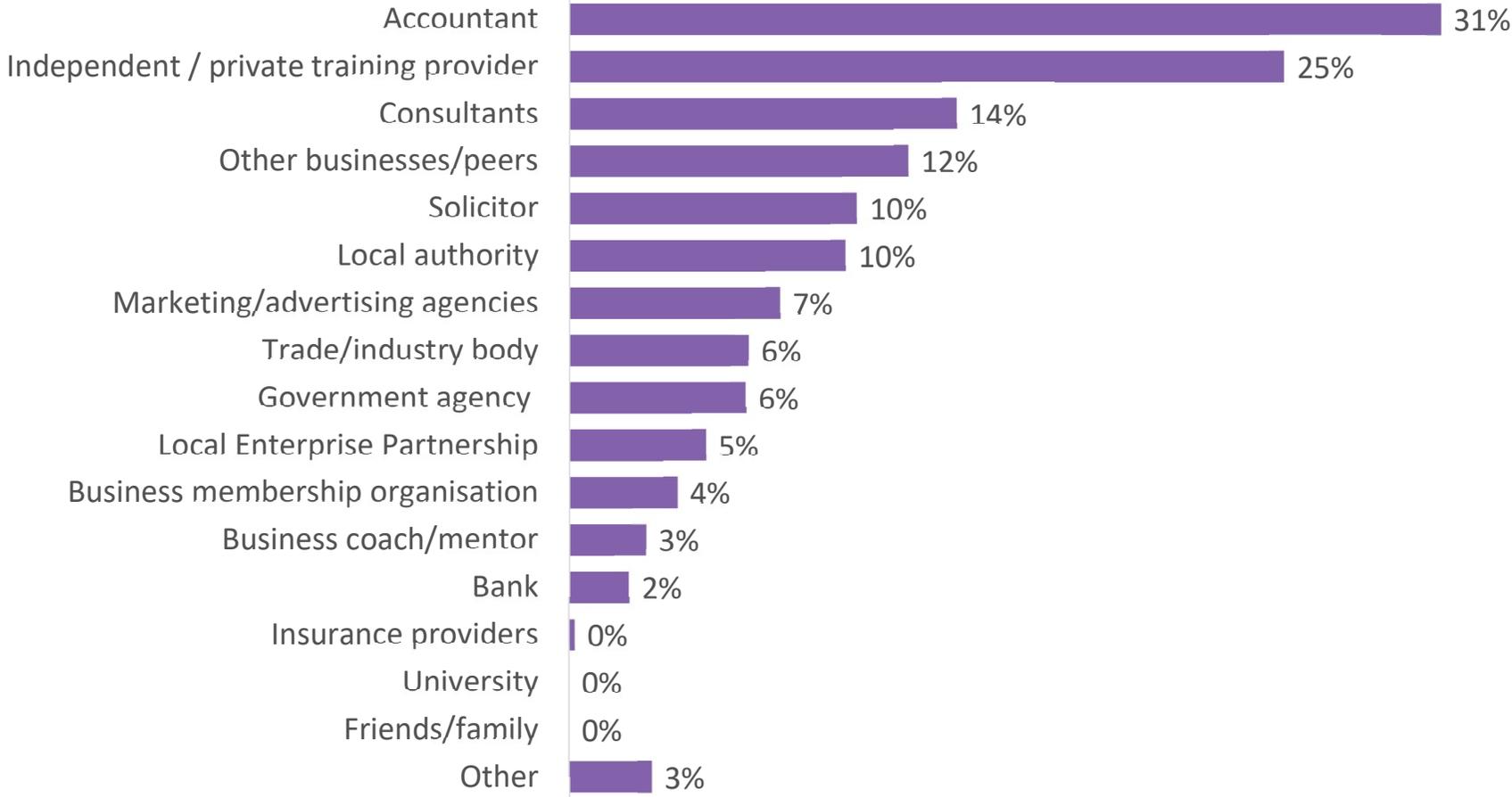
The number of organisations who have sought advice in the last 12 months has trended downwards over the past 2 years.



# Types of independent advice sought



# Sources of independent advice



Q20. For which areas of your business/organisation have you sought independent advice in the last 12 months?  
 Private/voluntary sector Where have sought advice, unweighted base = 211



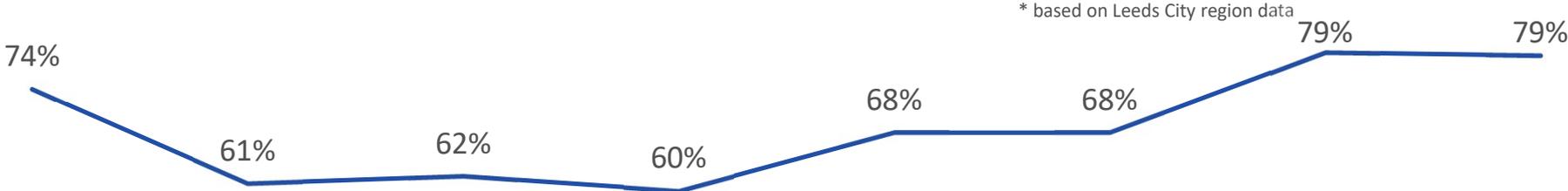
# Workforce, skills and training

## Workforce, skills and training – summary

- Following a 11%-point uplift in 2023, the proportion of business with skill gaps now remains stable, sitting at 79%.
- Skill gaps tend to increase with business size, with almost all companies with 50+ employees (92%) reporting skill gaps.
- Businesses/organisations in Kirklees are significantly less likely than average to record skill gaps, but nonetheless, this issue continues to be observed among 7 in 10 Kirklees business (72%).
- The most common skill gaps are: sales and marketing (39%); technical, specialist, or job specific skills (39%); digital or advanced IT skills (34); or management/leadership (29%). However, the gap in technical/specialist skills is the only gap in a key skill area that has decreased.
- In total, 29% of businesses reported having vacancies that were hard to fill. This continues a declining trend from a peak in 2022, at 39%; although, at 29%, this is still sitting above the pre-pandemic levels.
- Almost half (46%) of businesses surveyed did not offer work experience, internships, apprenticeships or graduate schemes, with the lowest instances of these being offered in the private sector. The most common scheme offered was work experience at 41%.
- A new question was asked this year to understand the importance businesses place on the concept of “fair work.” The majority of all businesses that hold fair work as very important in their working practices. Agreement levels are lower in manufacturing (64%) and construction (65%), and by size, among micro businesses (75%).

# % with any skill gaps in next 12 months

The proportion of business with skill gaps remains stable and at the highest level recorded following the 11% uplift in 2023.



2015\* (3,003) 2017\* (2,368) 2019 (1,383) 2020 (1,383) 2021 (1,579) 2022 (1,001) 2023 (1,014) 2024 (1,006)



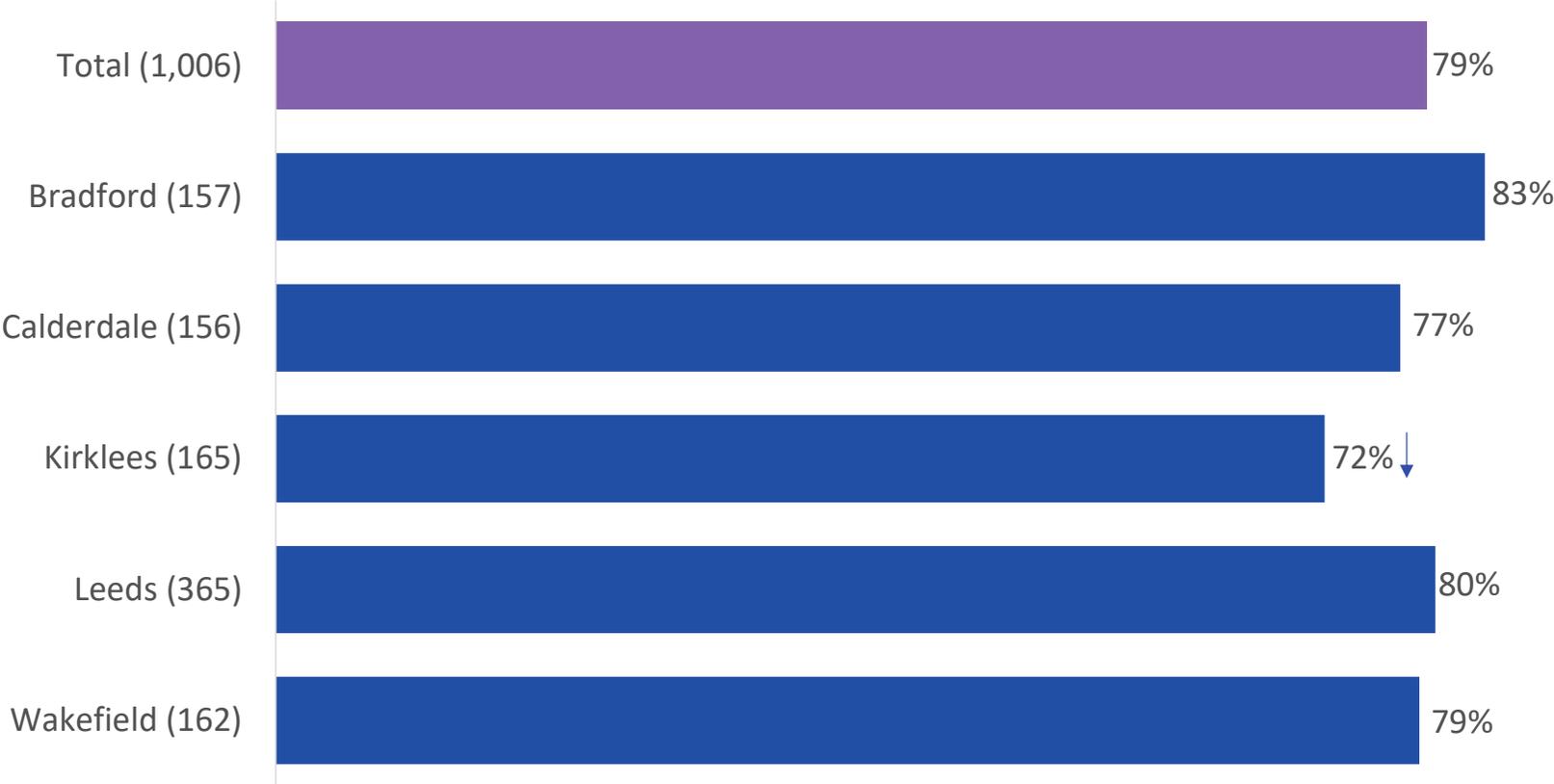
Q21. Which of the following skills need improving during the next 12 months to meet your business/organisations' needs? All respondents, unweighted bases shown in brackets



# % with any skill gaps in next 12 months



# % with any skill gaps in next 12 months



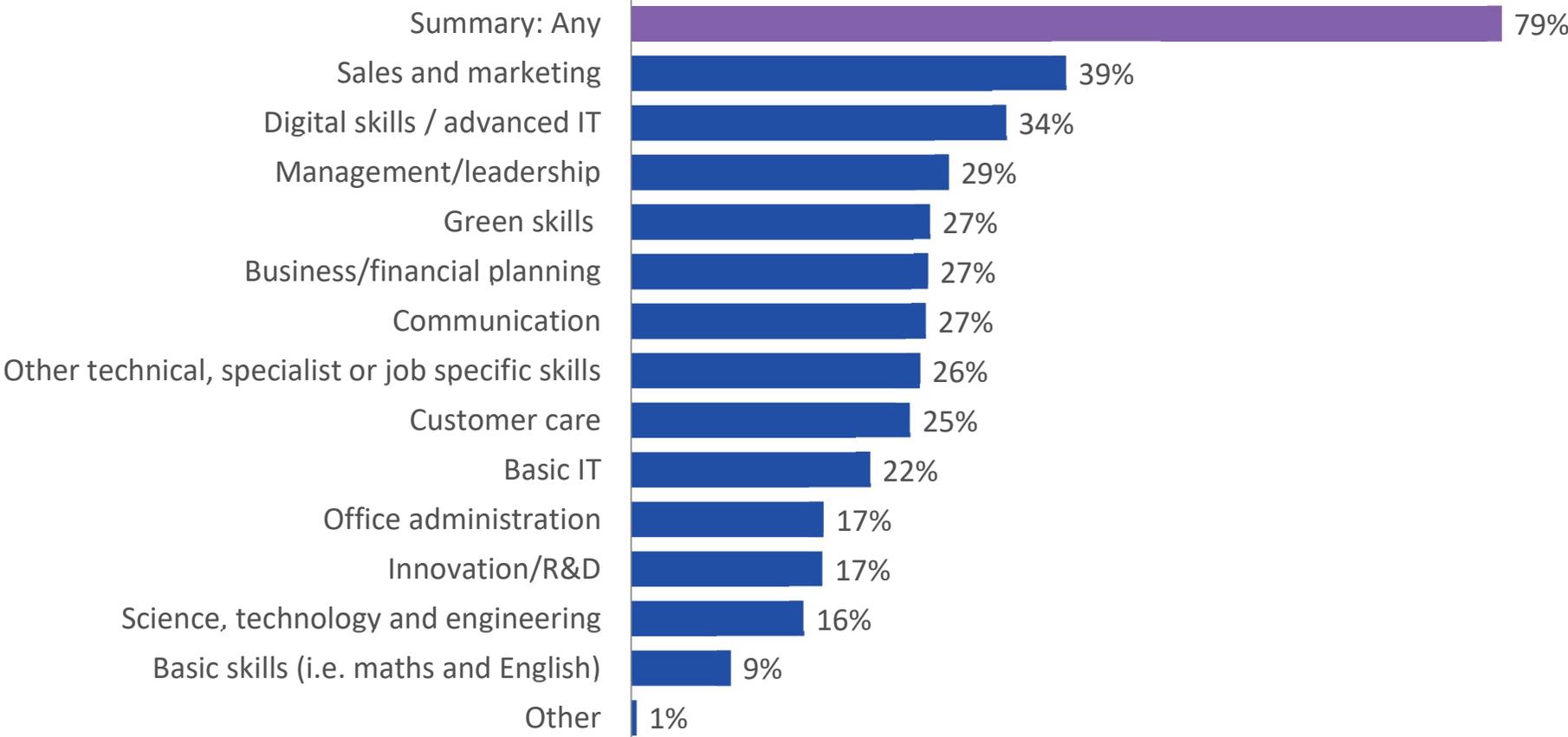
Q21. Which of the following skills need improving during the next 12 months to meet your business/organisations' needs?

All respondents, unweighted bases shown in brackets

Arrows indicate significant variations from the total at 95% confidence



# Types of skills gaps in next 12 months

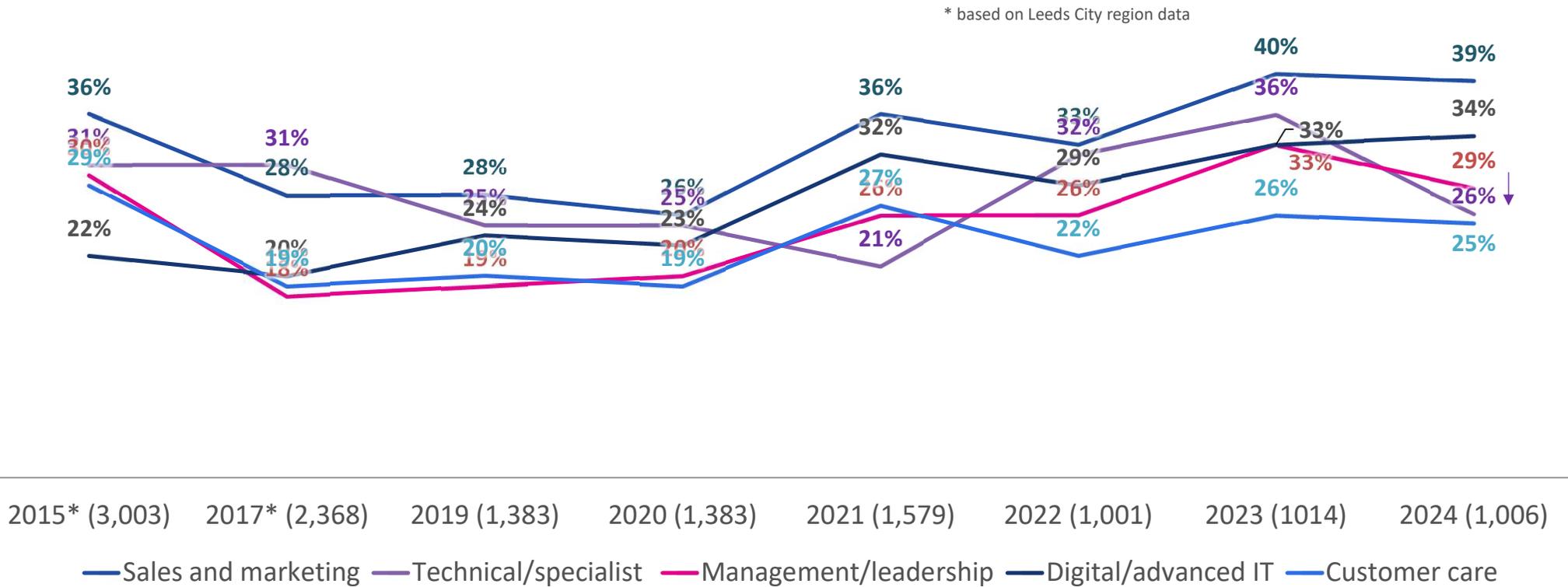


## Types of skills gaps in next 12 months

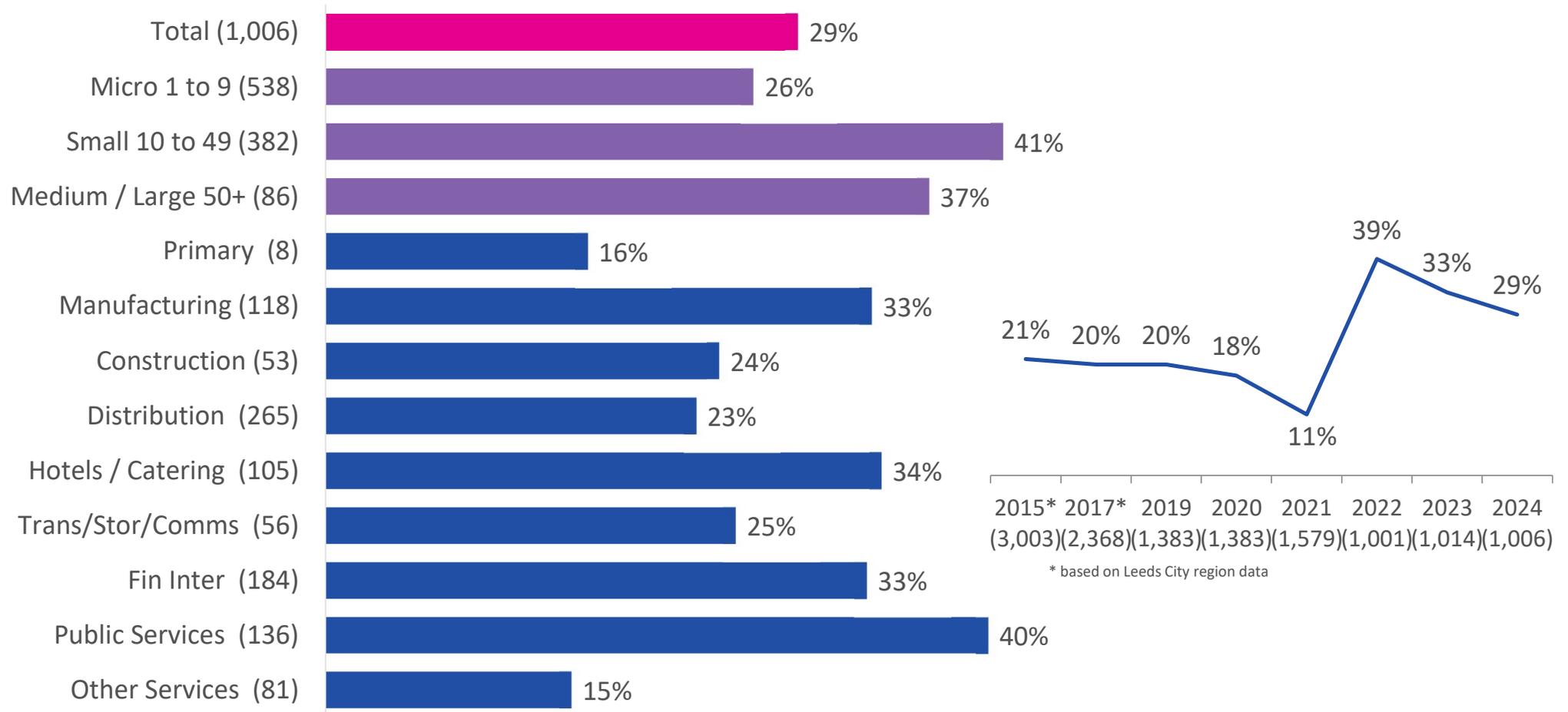
	Total (1,006)	Primary (8)	Manufacturing (118)	Construction (53)	Distribution (265)	Hotels/Catering (105)	Transport/Storage/ Comms (56)	Financial Intermediation (184)	Public Services (136)	Other Services (81)
Sales and marketing	39%	56%	44%	35%	41%	45%	47%	38%	31%	33%
Digital skills / advanced IT	34%	78%	27%	26%	33%	17%	41%	37%	40%	38%
Management/leadership	29%	44%	31%	32%	27%	23%	31%	29%	26%	28%
Business/financial planning	27%	56%	23%	31%	21%	20%	30%	29%	28%	29%
Communication	27%	46%	16%	23%	30%	24%	20%	25%	38%	28%
Green skills - Green skills are the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society	27%	62%	26%	23%	31%	20%	19%	26%	34%	27%
Other technical, specialist or job specific skills	26%	35%	27%	+38%	21%	17%	22%	29%	31%	18%
Customer care	25%	22%	15%	-13%	35%	32%	31%	23%	22%	25%
Basic IT	22%	63%	15%	15%	26%	22%	13%	23%	22%	23%
Office administration	17%	22%	18%	33%	16%	9%	6%	16%	23%	16%
Innovation/R&D	17%	24%	32%	11%	18%	12%	19%	16%	20%	15%
Science, technology and engineering	16%	44%	24%	18%	16%	7%	18%	17%	9%	5%
Basic skills (i.e. maths and English)	9%	24%	8%	11%	9%	18%	5%	6%	13%	4%
Sales and marketing	39%	56%	44%	35%	41%	45%	47%	38%	31%	33%

## % with specific skills gaps

Mirroring the year-on-year stability in skills gaps overall, the gaps in key skill areas are broadly stable- only the gap in technical/specialist skills has decreased.



## % with hard to fill vacancies in last year



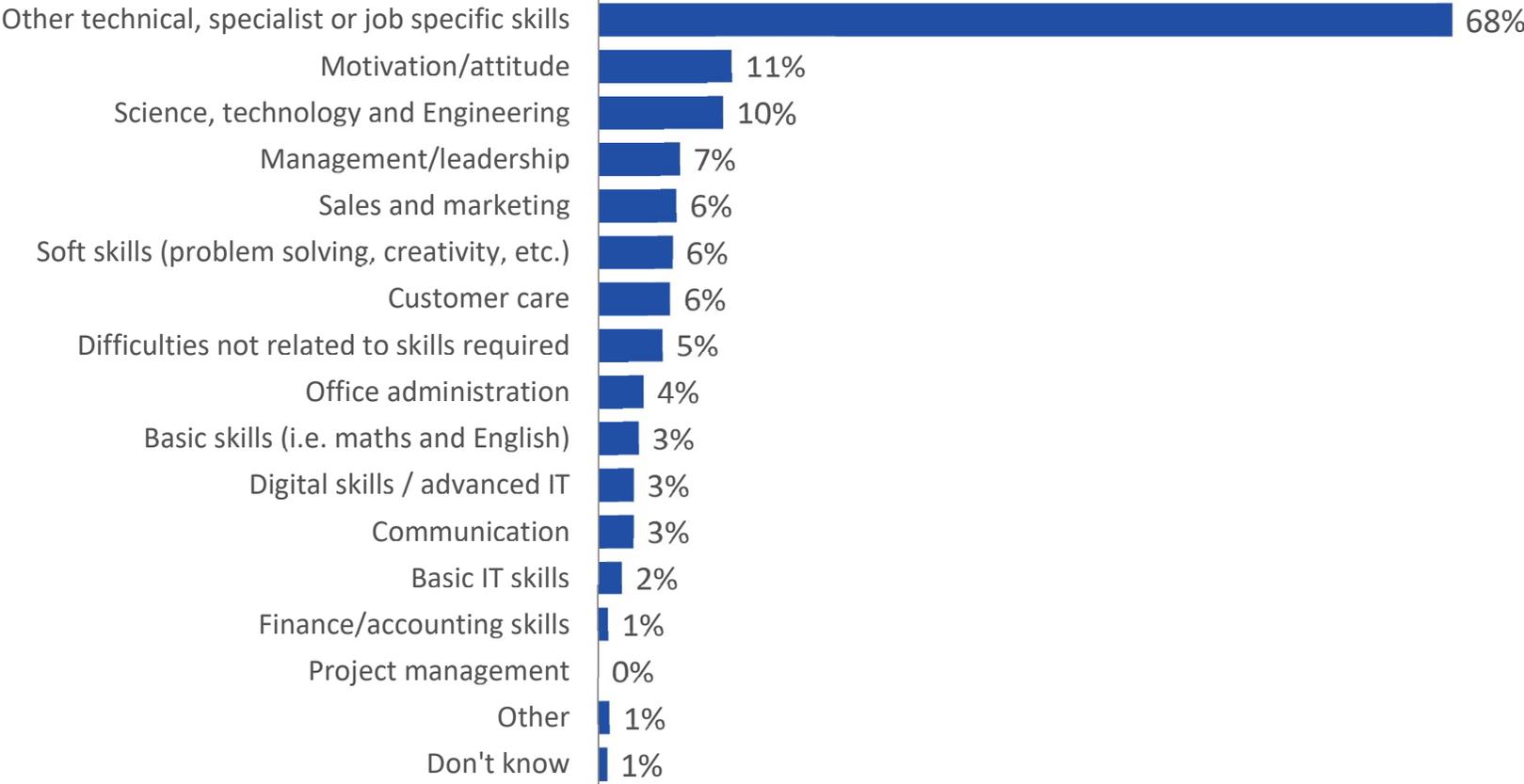
# % with hard to fill vacancies in last year



Q22. Did you have any staff vacancies that you found hard to fill, or could not fill, during the last 12 months? All respondents, unweighted bases shown in brackets



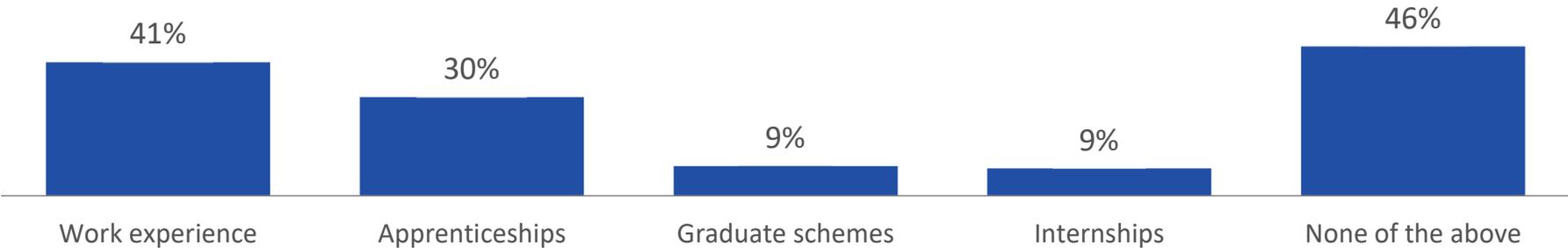
# Skills that have been difficult to recruit in last year



Q23. Which skills did you find difficult to recruit? All with hard to fill vacancies, unweighted base = 327

# Schemes offered by businesses and organisations

Almost half of businesses do not offer any of the listed schemes, driven by lower instances of the offer in the private sector.

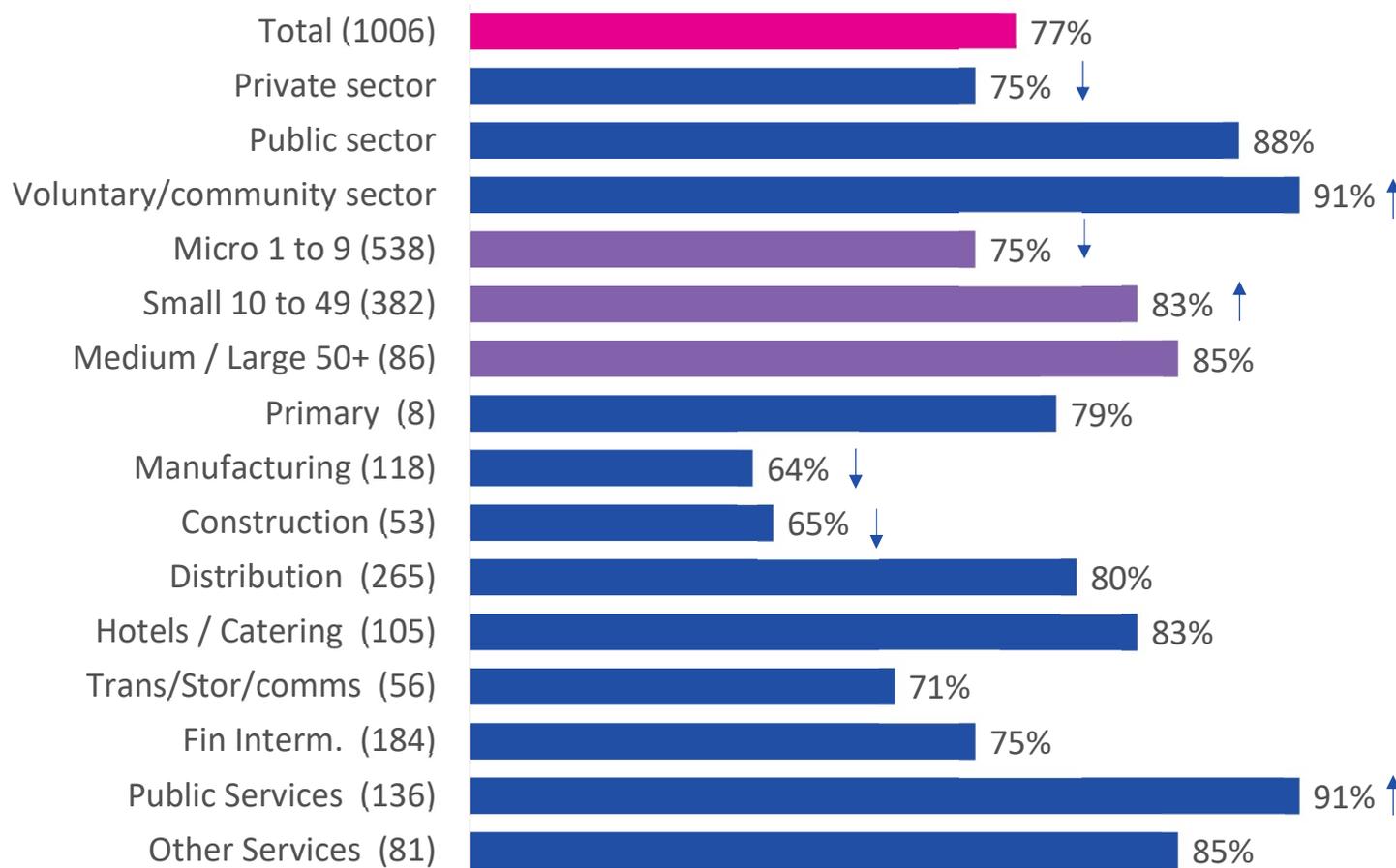


	Total	1 to 9 employees	10 to 49 employees	50+ employees	Private sector	Public sector	Voluntary/community sector
<i>Unweighted Base</i>	1006	538	382	86	885	25	96
<b>Total: Any Offer</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>60%</b>

Q23b. Which of the following do you offer? All respondents, 1006

## Fair work – summary

The majority of all businesses that hold fair work as very important in their working practices.



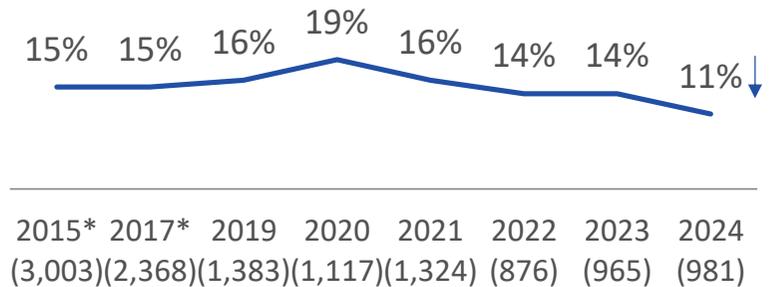
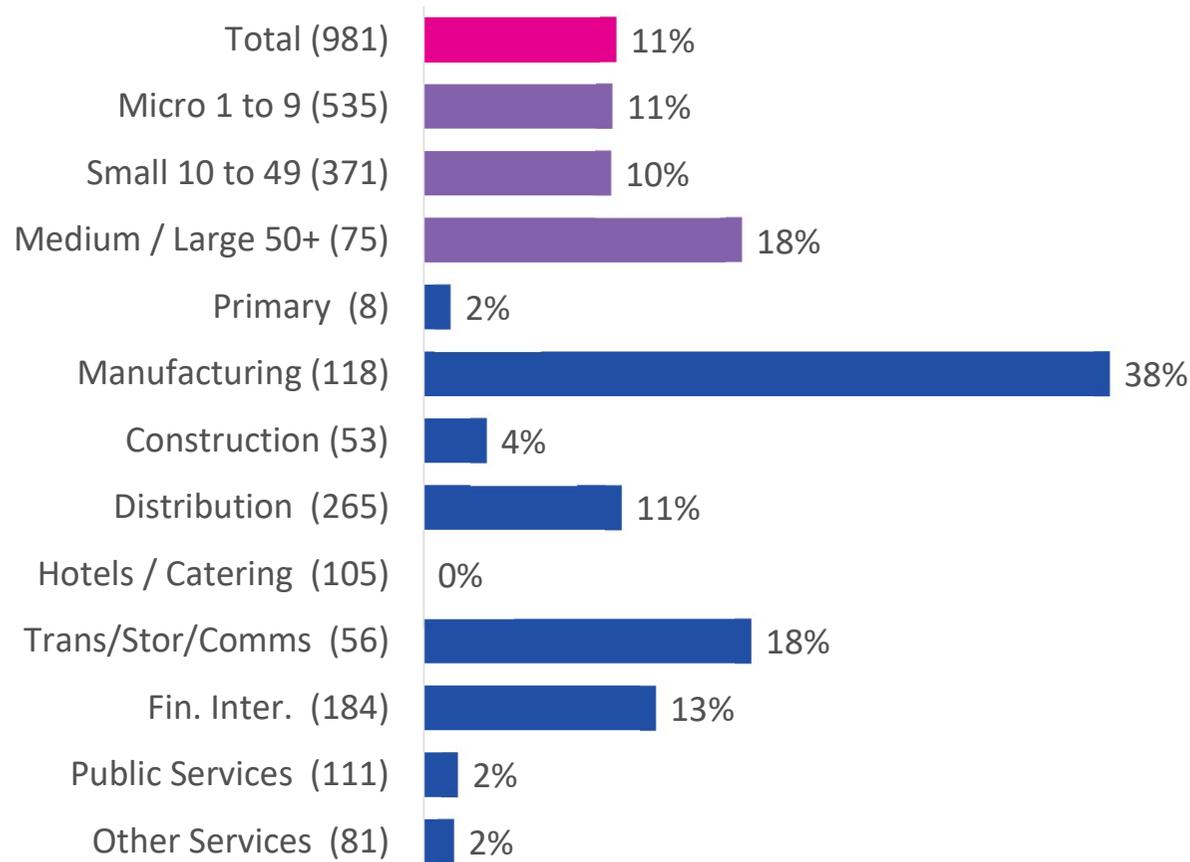
# Customer base and trade destinations

## Customer base – summary

- At 11%, the proportion of businesses that export is at the lowest levels recorded, down from 14% in 2023, and down from a peak of 19% in 2020.
  - This increases to 18% among businesses with 50+ employees.
  - Of those that export, the majority export to EU countries (91%), while a half export to North America (53%).

## % currently export

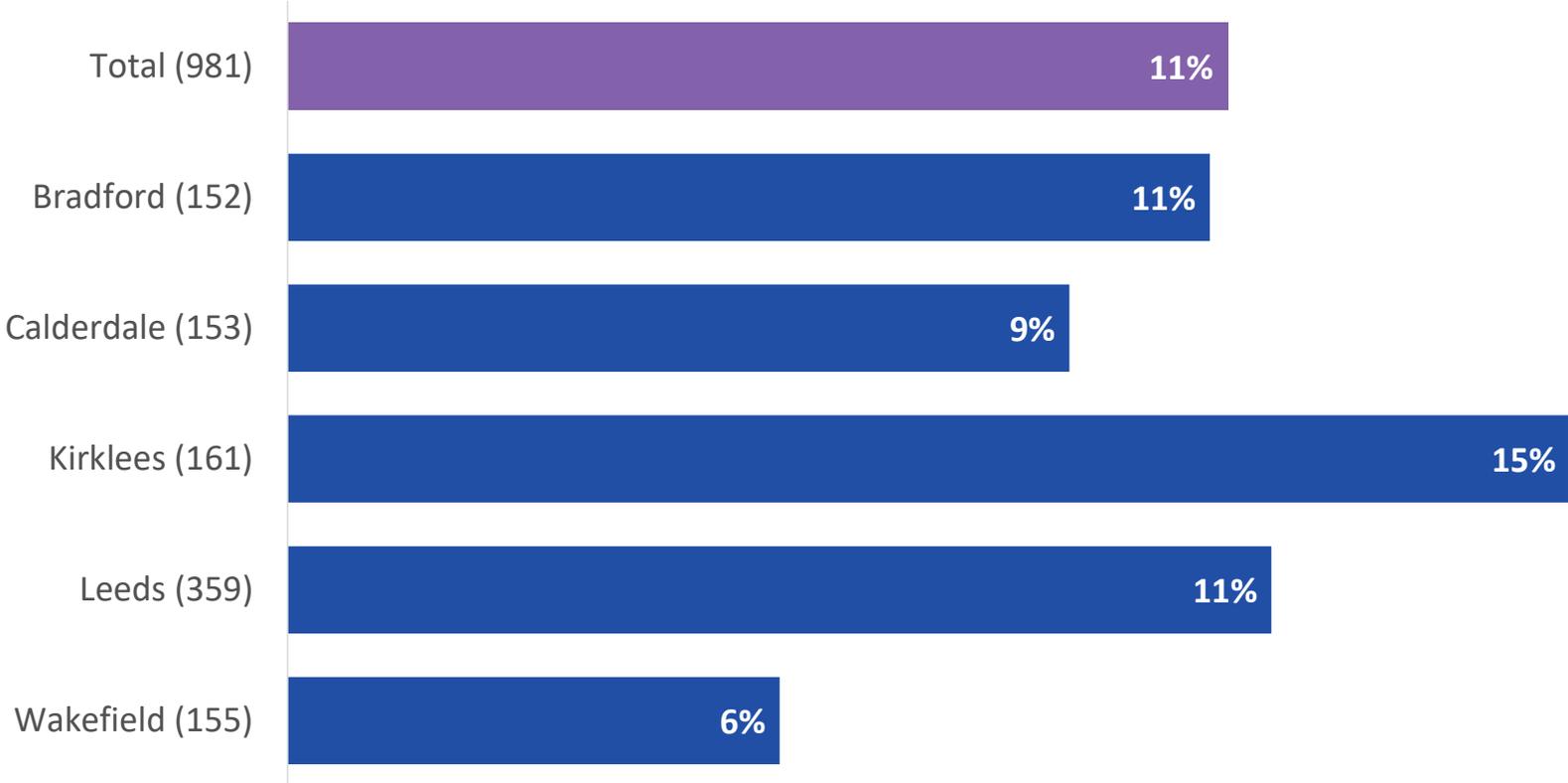
At 11%, the proportion of businesses that export is at the lowest levels recorded.



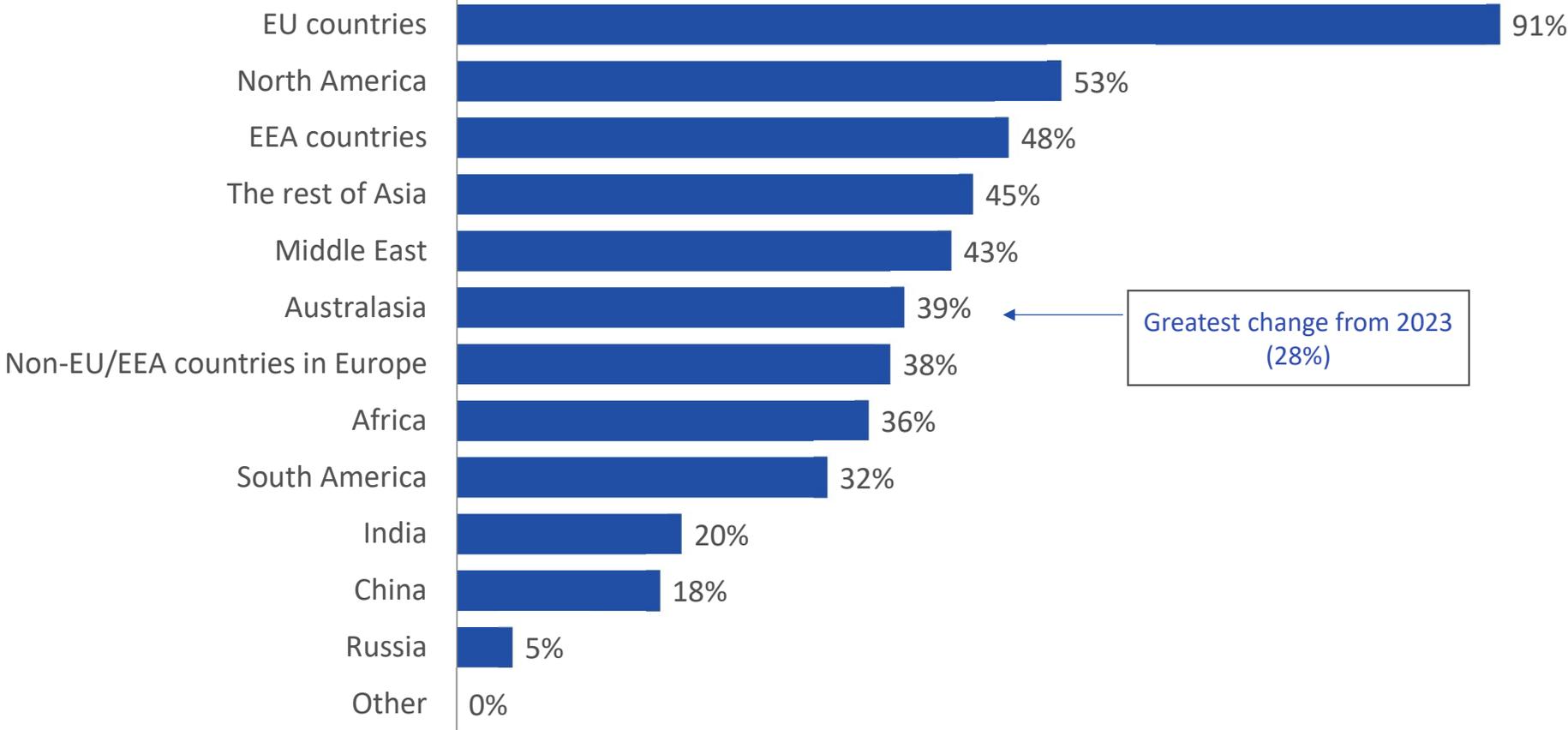
2015\* (3,003) 2017\* (2,368) 2019 (1,383) 2020 (1,117) 2021 (1,324) 2022 (876) 2023 (965) 2024 (981)

\* based on Leeds City region data

# % currently export



# Where export to



# % of sales from specific locations

	0%	1-10%	11-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-99%	100%	Any
Within Yorkshire & Humber	2%	9%	7%	8%	8%	22%	39%	93%
Rest of the UK	90%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	0%	10%
The EU	91%	6%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	9%

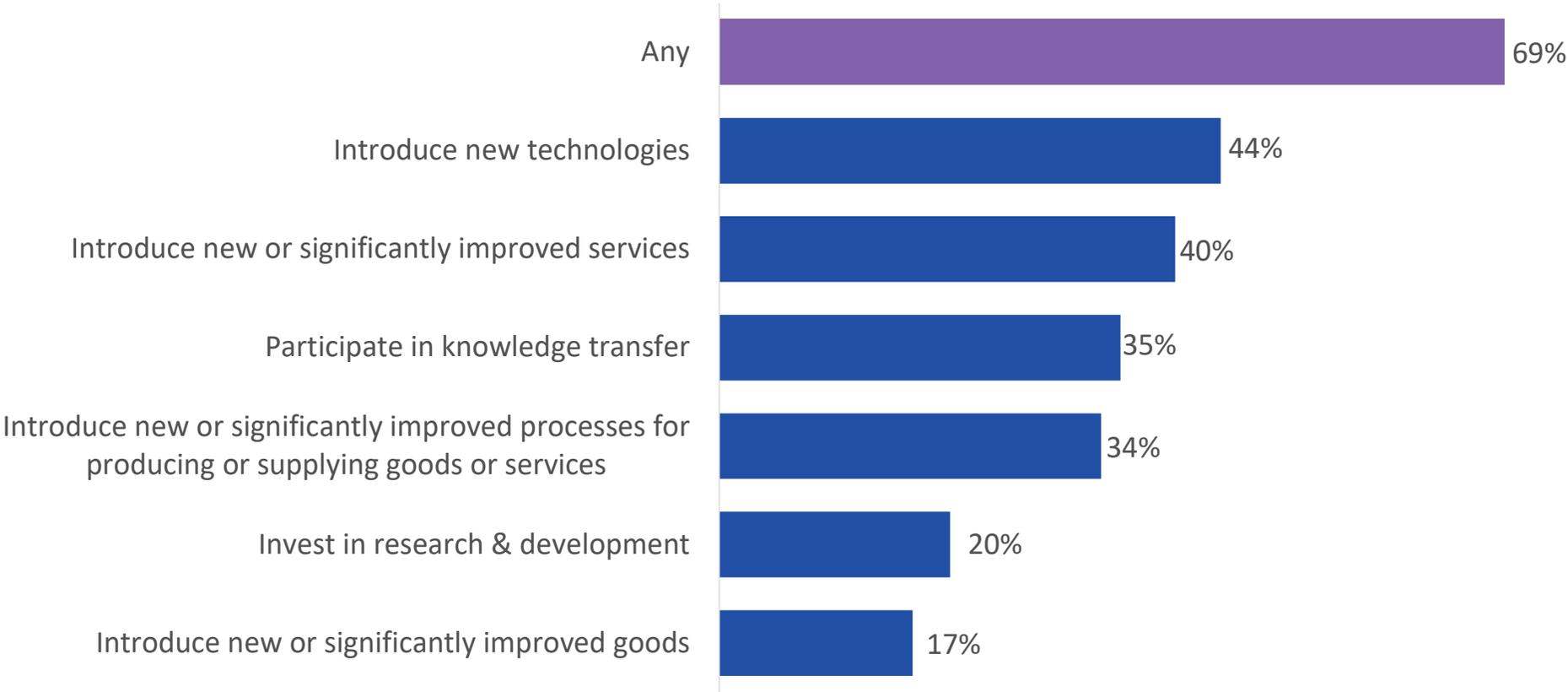
Q26. Thinking now about your markets for products and services, please estimate the proportion of your sales that originate from. Private/voluntary sector providing a valid response, unweighted base = 981 (valid responses)

# R&D/business innovation

## R&D/business innovation – summary

- Over two thirds (69%) of private/voluntary sector businesses have undertaken any R&D/innovation in the past three years, rising to 95% of medium/large businesses.
- The most common innovation activities involve new technologies (44%) and new or significantly improved services (40%).
- Overall, 20% of business think there will be barriers to innovation in the next three years- this increases to 37% among medium/larger businesses.
- Among those who foresee barriers to innovation, the most commonly cited barriers relate to financial implications and economic barriers (Innovation costs too high: 69%; Finance costs: 61%; Excessive economic risk: 56%).
- The most frequently mentioned collaborators for R&D/business innovation remain business networks (67%) and other companies (71%).
- For the first time, businesses were asked about their use of technologies. The usage of technologies ranges from relatively high (video conferencing, 72%; cloud based computing, 62%) to very low levels (quantum computing, 3%; VR/AR, 4%)

# Innovation/R&D undertaken in past three years



Q31. During the past 3 years did your business/organisation...  
All except public sector, unweighted base = 981



## Innovation/R&D undertaken in past three years

Consistent with the picture recorded in 2023, new technologies are the most common form of R&D across organisation sizes, and increase in likelihood as business size increases.

	Total (981)	Micro 1 to 9 (535)	Small 10 to 49 (371)	Medium/Large 50+ (75)
<b>ANY</b>	69%	67%	77%	95%
Introduce new technologies	44%	41%	52%	79%
Introduce new or significantly improved services	40%	38%	46%	67%
Participate in knowledge transfer	35%	35%	36%	45%
Introduce new or significantly improved processes for producing or supplying goods or services	34%	31%	44%	58%
Invest in research & development	20%	18%	29%	39%
Introduce new or significantly improved goods	17%	16%	20%	34%
<b>All</b>	3%	3%	2%	10%

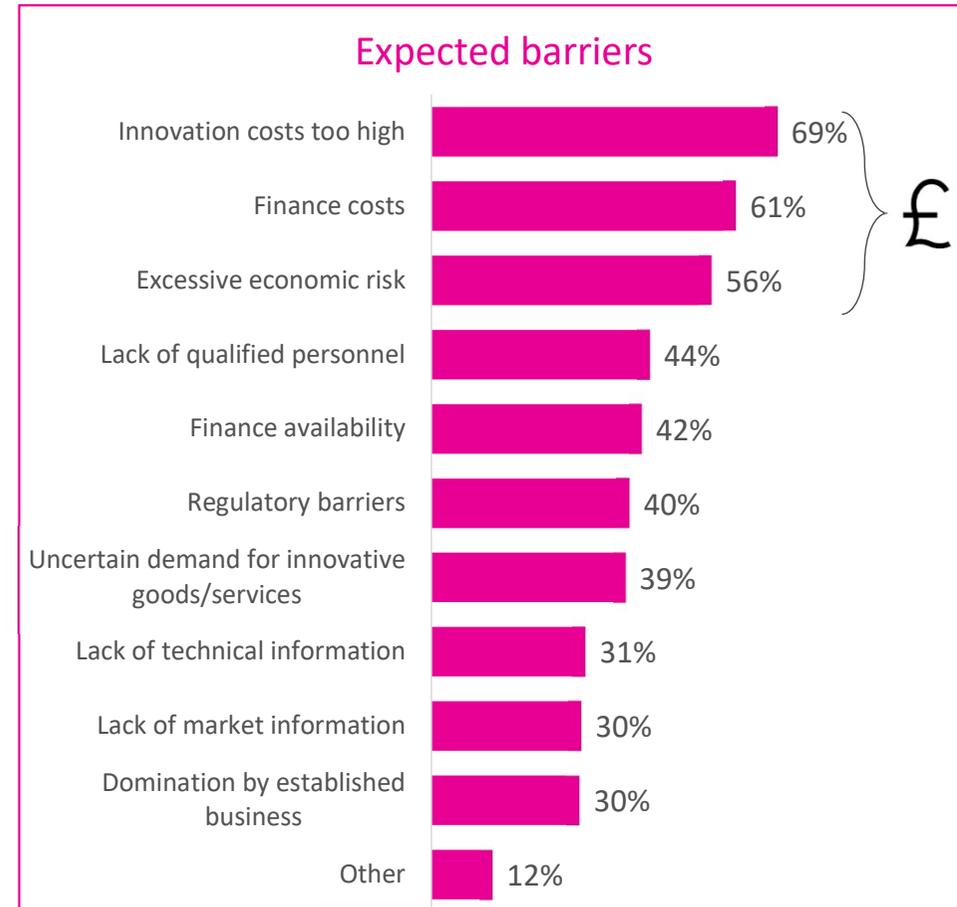
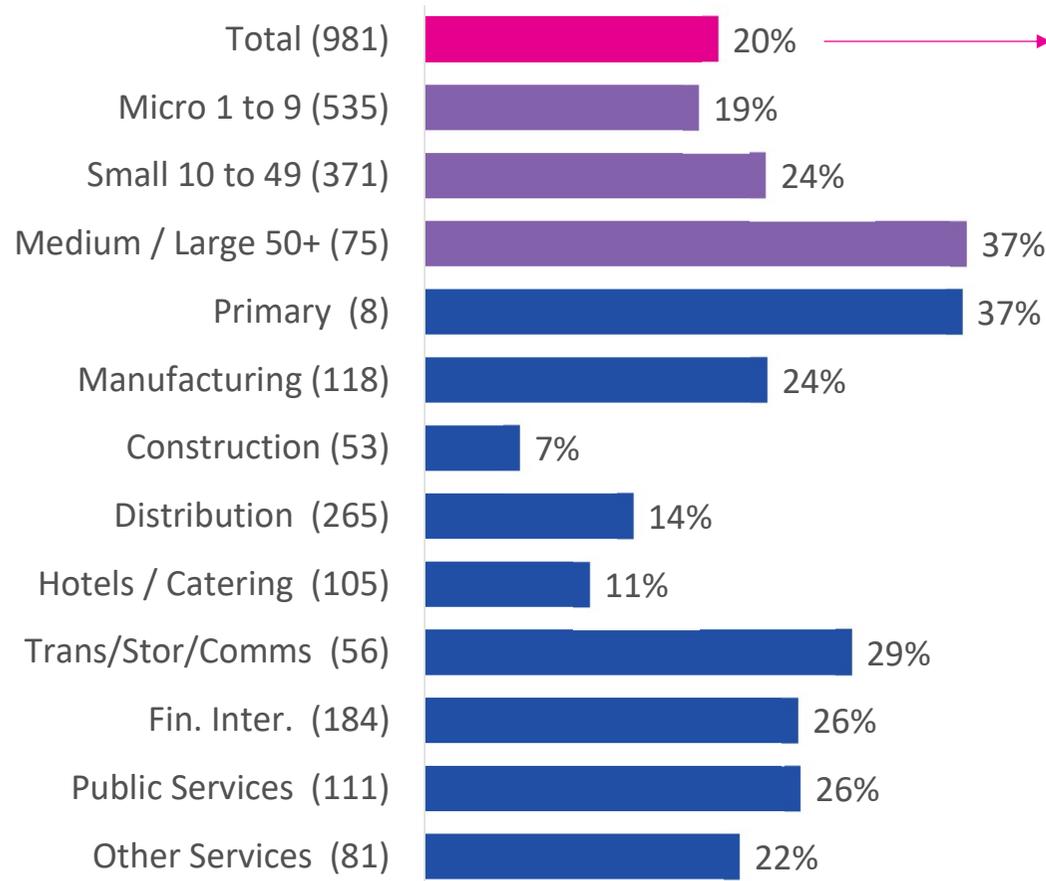
## Innovation/R&D undertaken in past three years

	Primary (8)	Manufacturing (118)	Construction (53)	Distribution (265)	Hotels/Catering (105)	Transport/Storage/Comms (56)	Financial Intermediation (184)	Public Services (111)	Other Services (81)
<b>ANY</b>	58%	78%	60%	72%	61%	65%	73%	67%	73%
Introduce new technologies	15%	51%	36%	46%	35%	44%	48%	51%	37%
Introduce new or significantly improved services	13%	39%	44%	43%	35%	32%	40%	43%	48%
Participate in knowledge transfer	57%	27%	31%	34%	29%	30%	38%	49%	37%
Introduce new or significantly improved processes for producing or supplying goods or services	2%	54%	31%	36%	26%	32%	35%	37%	16%
Invest in research & development	16%	40%	24%	17%	10%	18%	22%	18%	15%
Introduce new or significantly improved goods	0%	37%	11%	24%	27%	14%	12%	10%	10%
<b>ALL</b>	0%	7%	4%	4%	2%	5%	3%	1%	3%

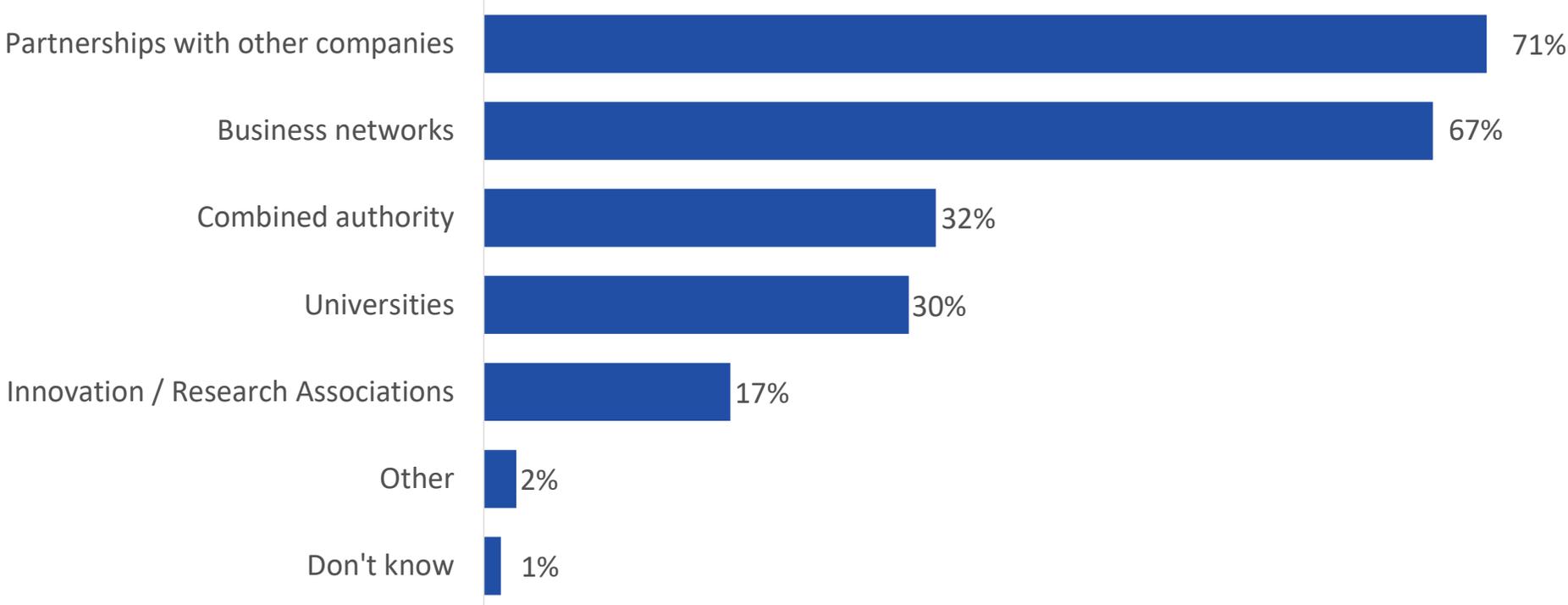
## Innovations/R&D undertaken in past three years

	Total (981)	Bradford (152)	Calderdale (153)	Kirklees (161)	Leeds (359)	Wakefield (155)
<b>ANY</b>	69%	70%	72%	67%	70%	65%
Introduce new technologies	44%	39%	44%	46%	48%	37%
Introduce new or significantly improved services	40%	48%	42%	34%	40%	35%
Participate in knowledge transfer	35%	39%	37%	34%	35%	30%
Introduce new or significantly improved processes for producing or supplying goods or services	34%	33%	32%	32%	36%	31%
Invest in research & development	20%	23%	23%	22%	18%	18%
Introduce new or significantly improved goods	17%	14%	18%	16%	19%	16%
<b>ALL</b>	3%	7%	1%	2%	3%	3%

## % “Yes” there will be barriers to innovation in the next three years



# Collaborators when undertaking innovation or R&D



## Technology usage

For the first time, businesses were asked about their use of technologies. The usage of technologies ranges from relatively high (video conferencing, 72%; cloud based computing, 62%) to very low levels (quantum computing, 3%; VR/AR, 4%)

	Total (1006)	Micro 1 to 9 (538)	Small 10 to 49 (382)	Medium/Large 50+ (86)
Video conferencing/collaboration technology e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc	72%	69%	85%	90%
Cloud based computing	62%	60%	67%	73%
Cyber security technology (e.g. twofactor authentication)	51%	48%	64%	67%
5G	43%	42%	46%	58%
Internet of things (IoT) (e.g. smart factory equipment)	31%	30%	30%	41%
Business intelligence / business analytics	26%	23%	35%	50%
Computer aided design (CAD) software	26%	25%	30%	37%
Artificial intelligence (AI), robotics or automation	17%	16%	19%	26%
Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR)	4%	3%	6%	11%
Quantum computing (e.g. quantum programming, quantum algorithms)	3%	3%	4%	6%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	2%
None of the above	10%	12%	4%	2%

## Technology usage

	Primary (8)	Manufacturing (118)	Construction (53)	Distribution (265)	Hotels/Catering (105)	Transport/Storage/ Comms (56)	Financial Intermediation (184)	Public Services (136)	Other Services (81)
Video conferencing/collaboration technology e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc	79%	63%	55%	61%	61%	71%	85%	89%	73%
Cloud based computing	57%	68%	57%	46%	33%	68%	79%	71%	53%
Cyber security technology (e.g. twofactor authentication)	37%	49%	23%	57%	38%	53%	63%	63%	39%
5G	57%	54%	50%	39%	20%	45%	49%	38%	41%
Internet of things (IoT) (e.g. smart factory equipment)	43%	34%	27%	30%	32%	41%	29%	28%	31%
Business intelligence / business analytics	13%	32%	6%	27%	25%	31%	34%	24%	11%
Computer aided design (CAD) software	13%	54%	41%	19%	17%	15%	30%	19%	20%
Artificial intelligence (AI), robotics or automation	16%	18%	11%	13%	5%	27%	24%	17%	14%
Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR)	13%	3%	3%	3%	3%	10%	3%	5%	2%
Quantum computing (e.g. quantum programming, quantum algorithms)	0%	4%	4%	4%	0%	6%	2%	2%	1%
Don't know	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
None of the above	21%	8%	24%	10%	20%	10%	3%	6%	16%

## Technology usage

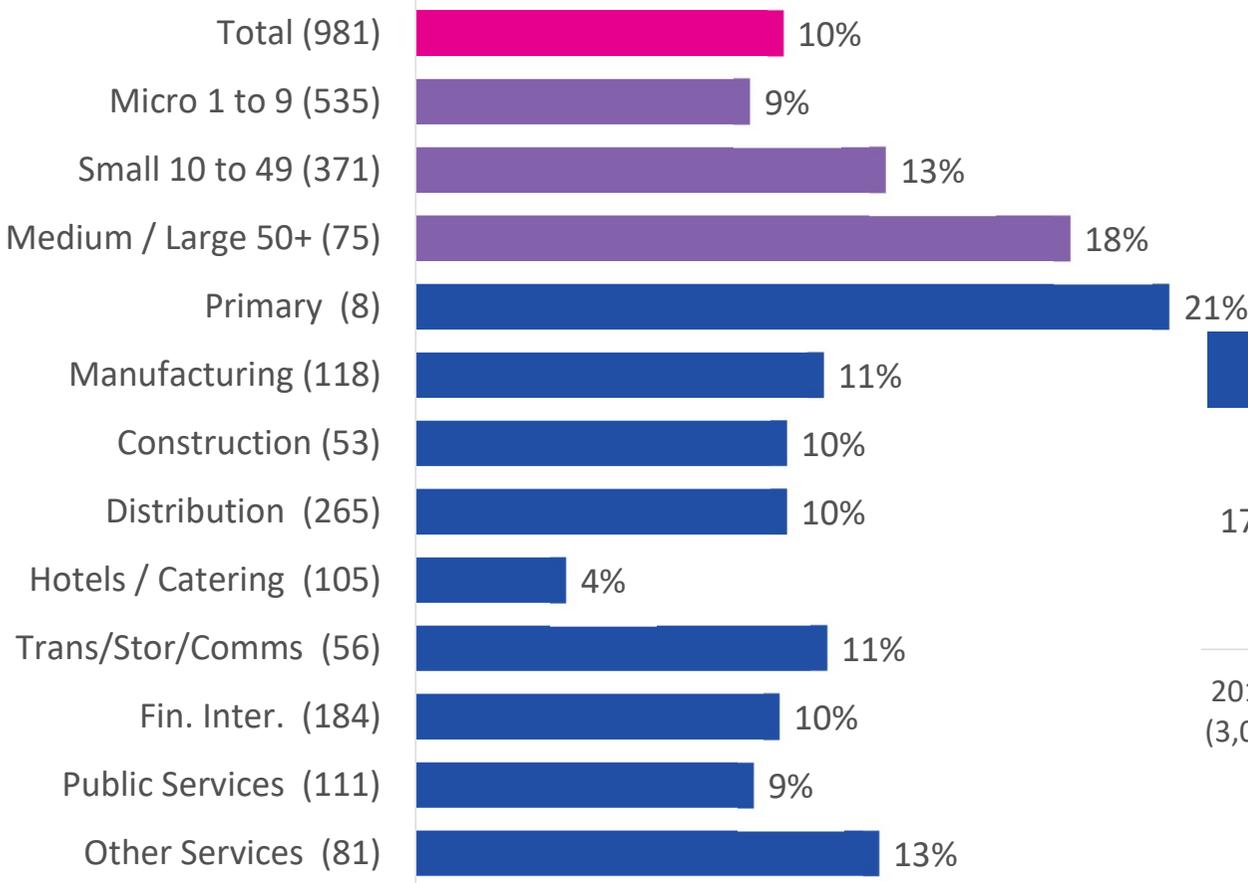
	Total (1006)	Bradford (157)	Calderdale (156)	Kirklees (165)	Leeds (365)	Wakefield (162)
Video conferencing/collaboration technology e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc	72%	70%	65%	63%	82%	64%
Cloud based computing	62%	62%	60%	54%	70%	50%
Cyber security technology (e.g. twofactor authentication)	51%	51%	51%	47%	54%	51%
5G	43%	58%	37%	30%	47%	34%
Internet of things (IoT) (e.g. smart factory equipment)	31%	35%	28%	24%	32%	31%
Business intelligence / business analytics	26%	22%	24%	22%	30%	26%
Computer aided design (CAD) software	26%	27%	25%	31%	25%	22%
Artificial intelligence (AI), robotics or automation	17%	13%	23%	18%	19%	11%
Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR)	4%	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%
Quantum computing (e.g. quantum programming, quantum algorithms)	3%	1%	4%	3%	4%	2%
Don't know	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	2%
None of the above	10%	7%	16%	17%	7%	12%

# Access to finance

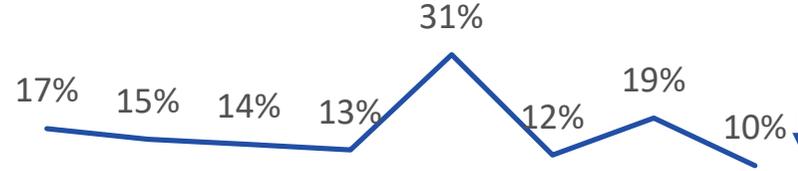
## Access to finance – summary

- Compared to last year, there has been a significant decline in the proportion of businesses that applied for new sources of finance/credit- at 10%, this is now at the lowest level recorded in the survey, although it is broadly consistent with the levels recorded in 2022 (cf. 12% in 2022, 19% in 2023, 10% in 2024).
- While all uses of credit have increased, the most notable growth is in cash flow (an increase of 24% points, and the most commonly cited overall use, at 65%) and business expansion (an increase of 17% points to 52%).
- Overwhelmingly, the source of the finance or credit tends to be the private sector (73%, cf., 40% public sector, although the latter has seen an increase from 19% in 2023).

# % applied for new sources of finance/credit\*\*



**10% were unsuccessful- a return to 2022 levels**



Year	Count
2015*	(3,003)
2017*	(2,368)
2019	(1,383)
2020	(1,117)
2021	(1,324)
2022	(876)
2023	(965)
2024	(981)

Q33. Have you applied for new sources of finance or credit, or renegotiated existing finance or credit for your business/organisation in the past 12 months? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

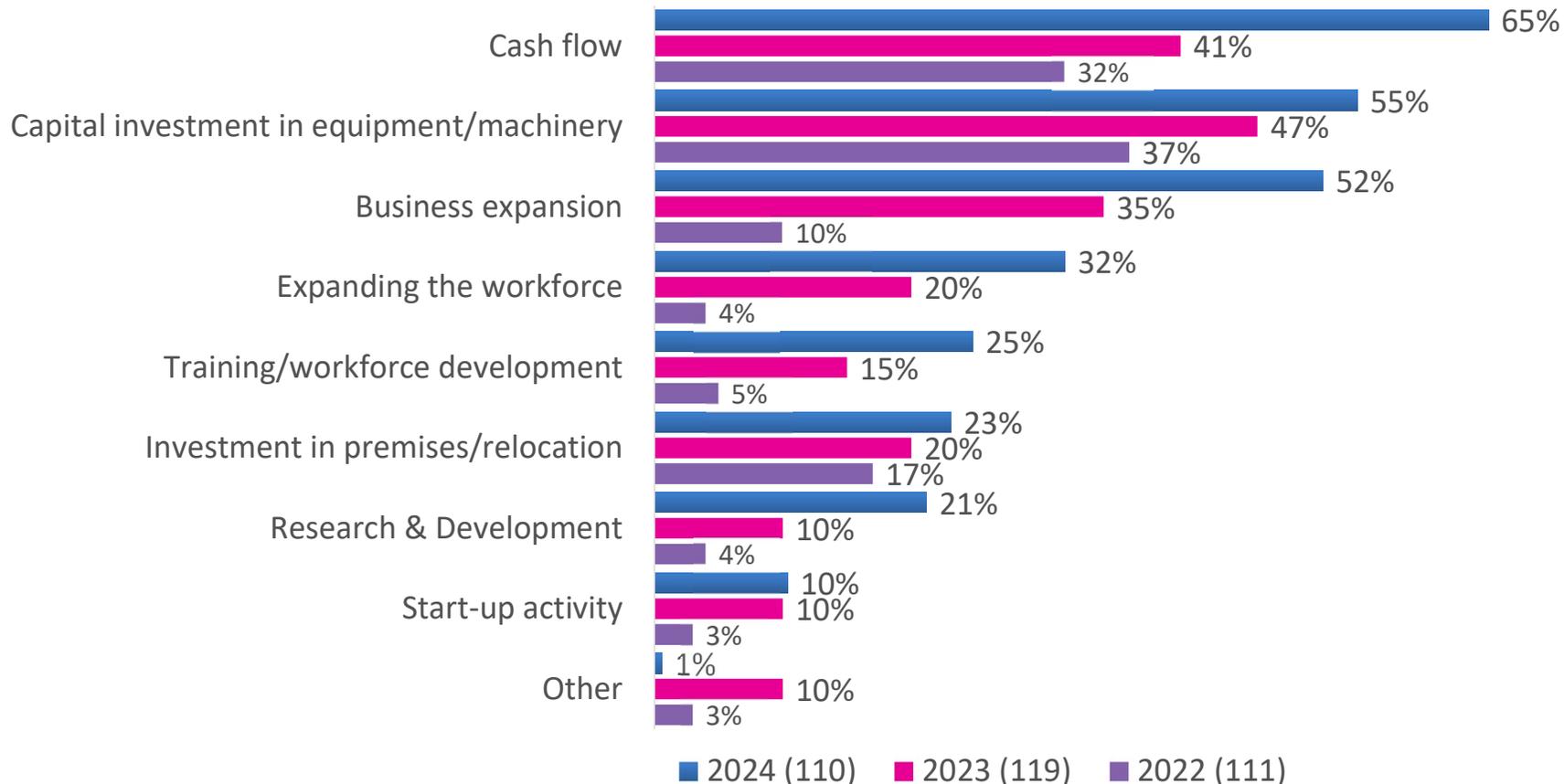


\*\*Or renegotiated existing finance or credit.  
\* based on Leeds City region data

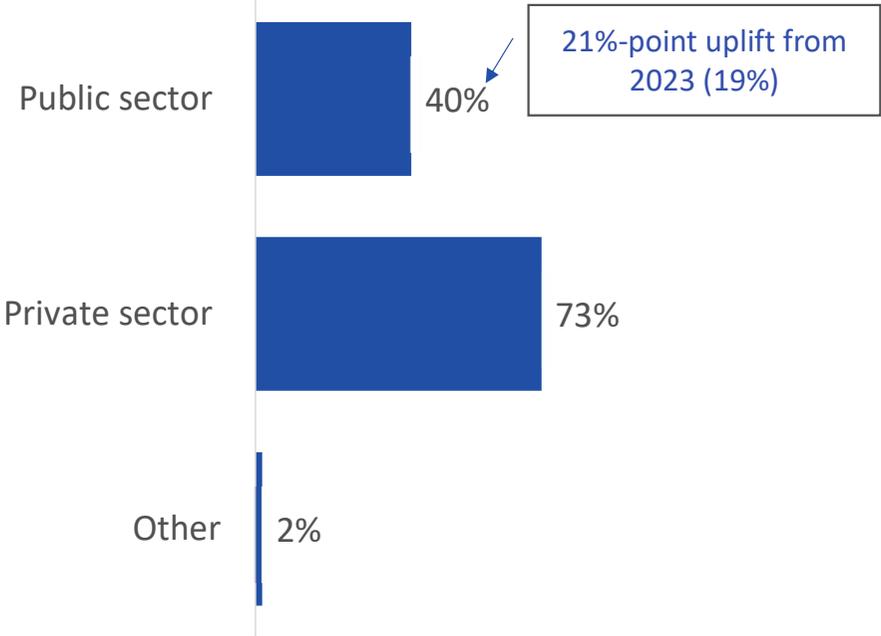


## Use of finance or credit

While all uses of credit have increased, the most notable growth is in cash flow (an increase of 24% points) and business expansion (an increase of 17% points).



# Source of finance or credit

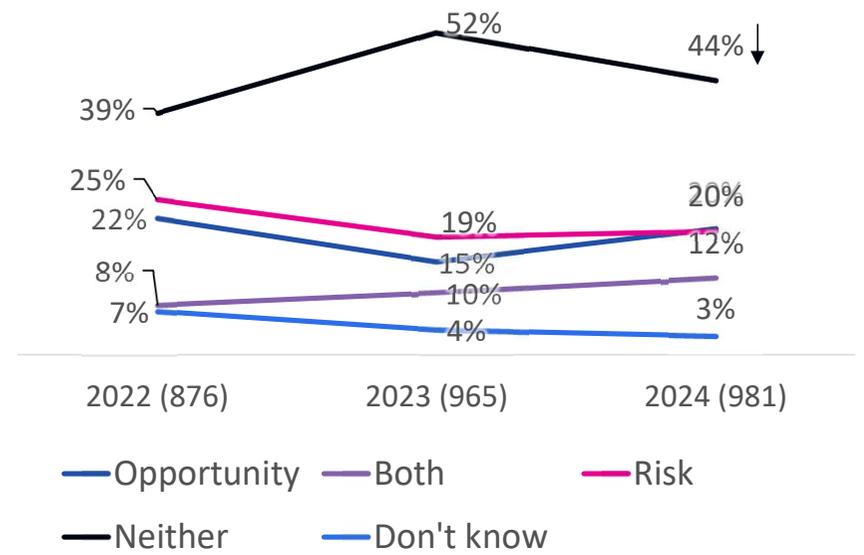
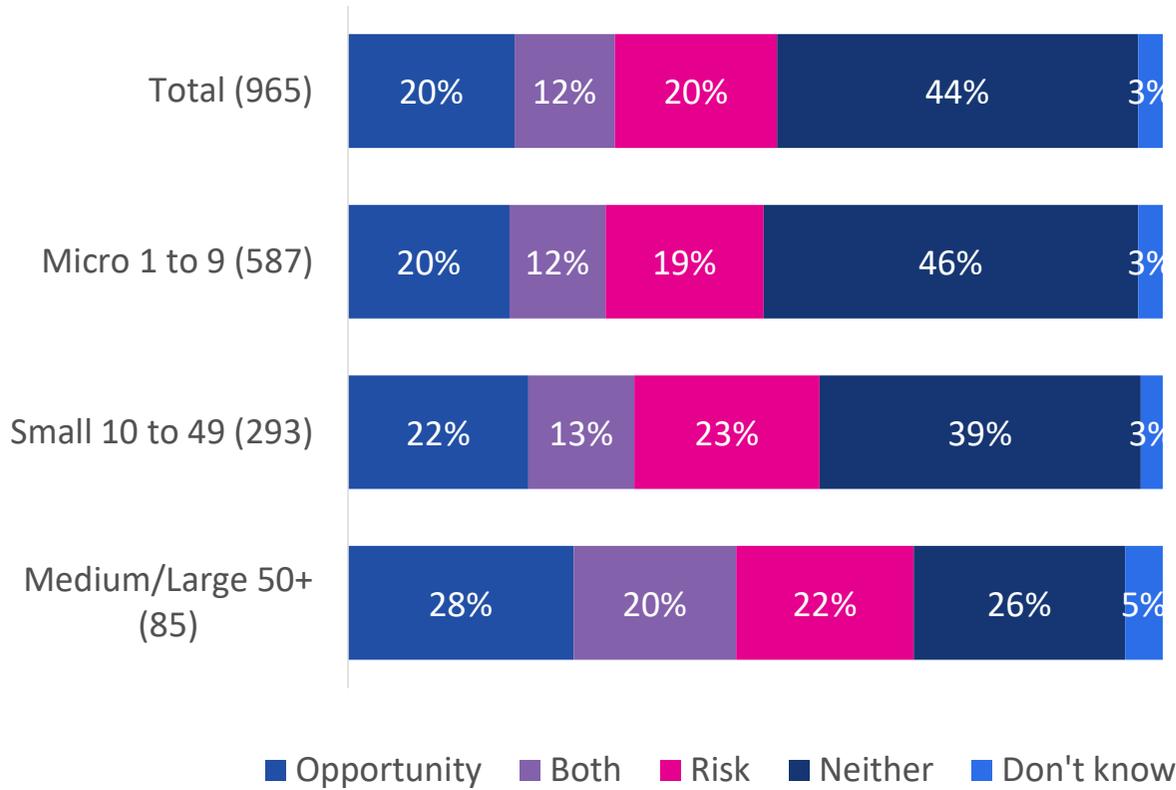


# Environmental improvement

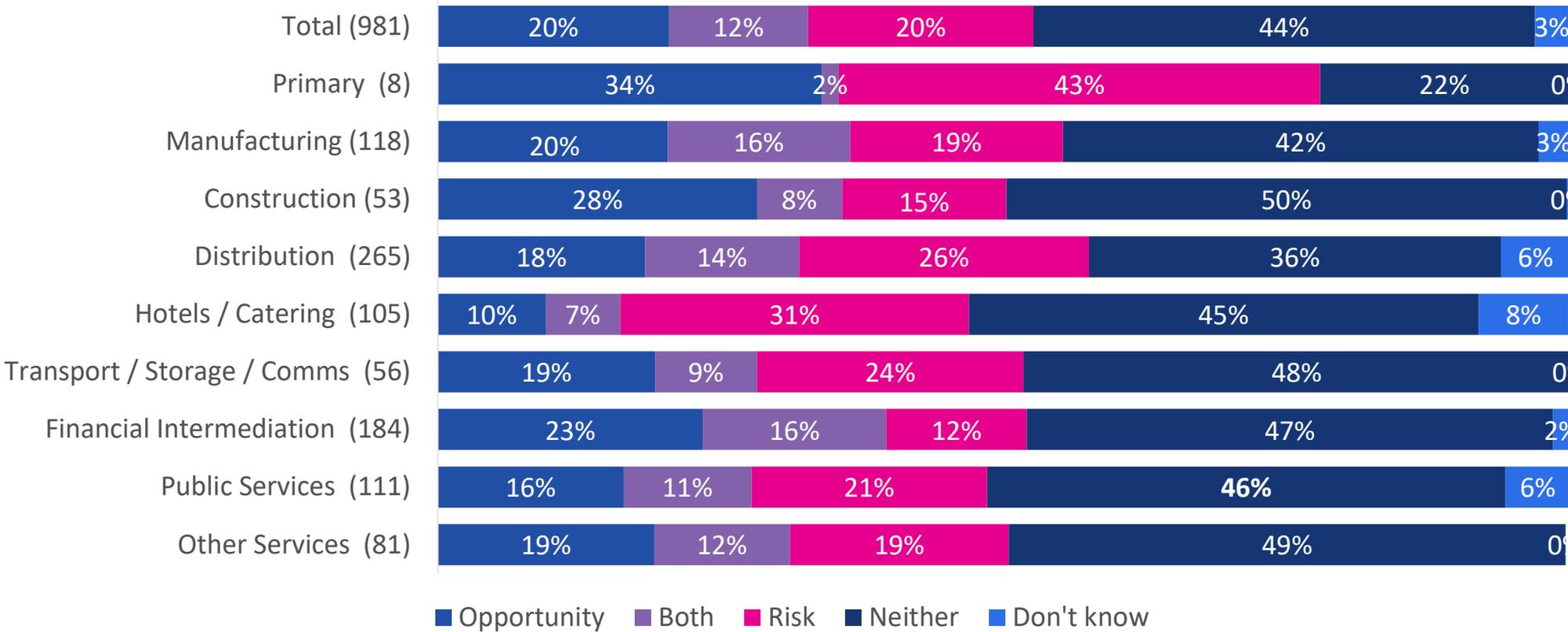
## Environmental improvement – summary

- Since 2023, the number of businesses and organisation who see climate change neither as a risk nor an opportunity has decreased, from 52% to 44%, whilst the proportions of those who see it as an opportunity has increased from 15% to 20%, perhaps suggesting businesses have plans for adaptation.
- Businesses in construction are the most likely to see it as an opportunity (28%; 15% see it as a risk). Conversely, those in catering/hotels are the most likely to see it as a risk (31%, cf. 10% who see it as an opportunity).
- Overall, 66% of businesses have reducing carbon emissions as an objective, a slight increase compared to last year's sample (60%). This is driven by an increase in those that have it as a secondary objective, from 50% to 57%.
- Interestingly, given the increased tendency for those in construction to see climate change as an opportunity, this is the sector that is least likely to have reducing carbon emissions, waste, and water use as an objective (47% have it as neither a primary nor secondary objective; though this has decreased from 56% last wave).

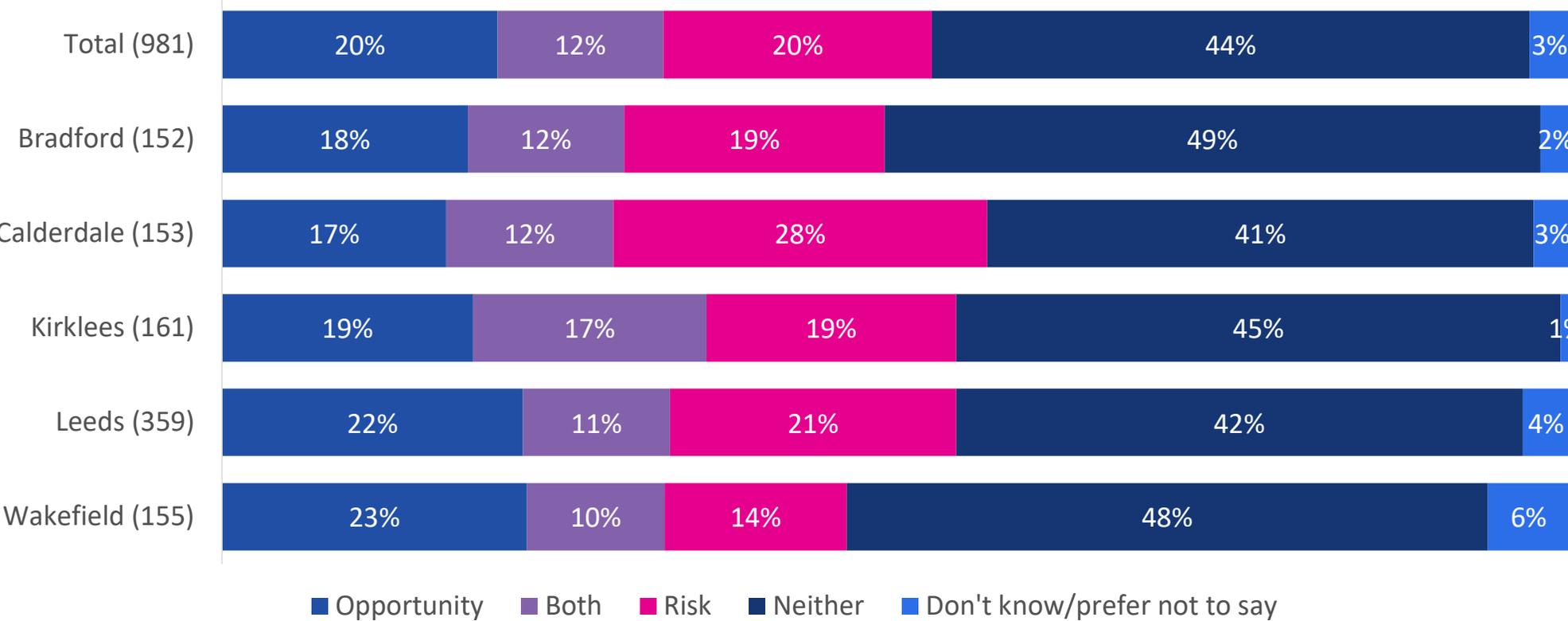
## Climate change – a risk or opportunity?



# Climate change – a risk or opportunity?



# Climate change – a risk or opportunity?

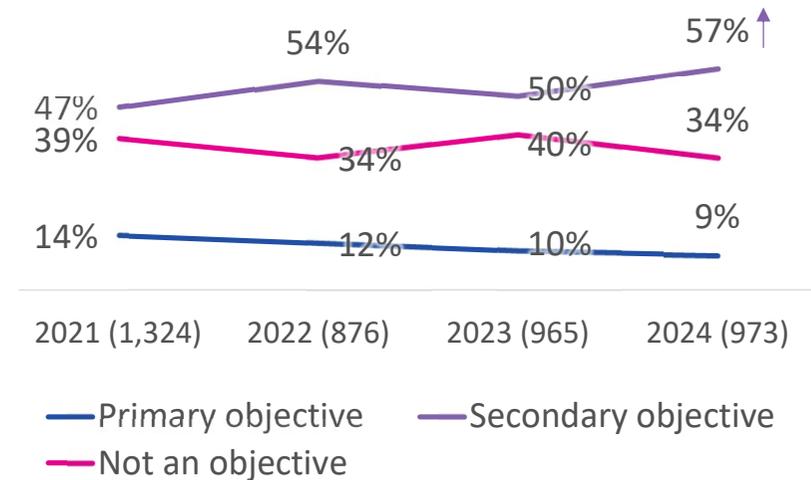
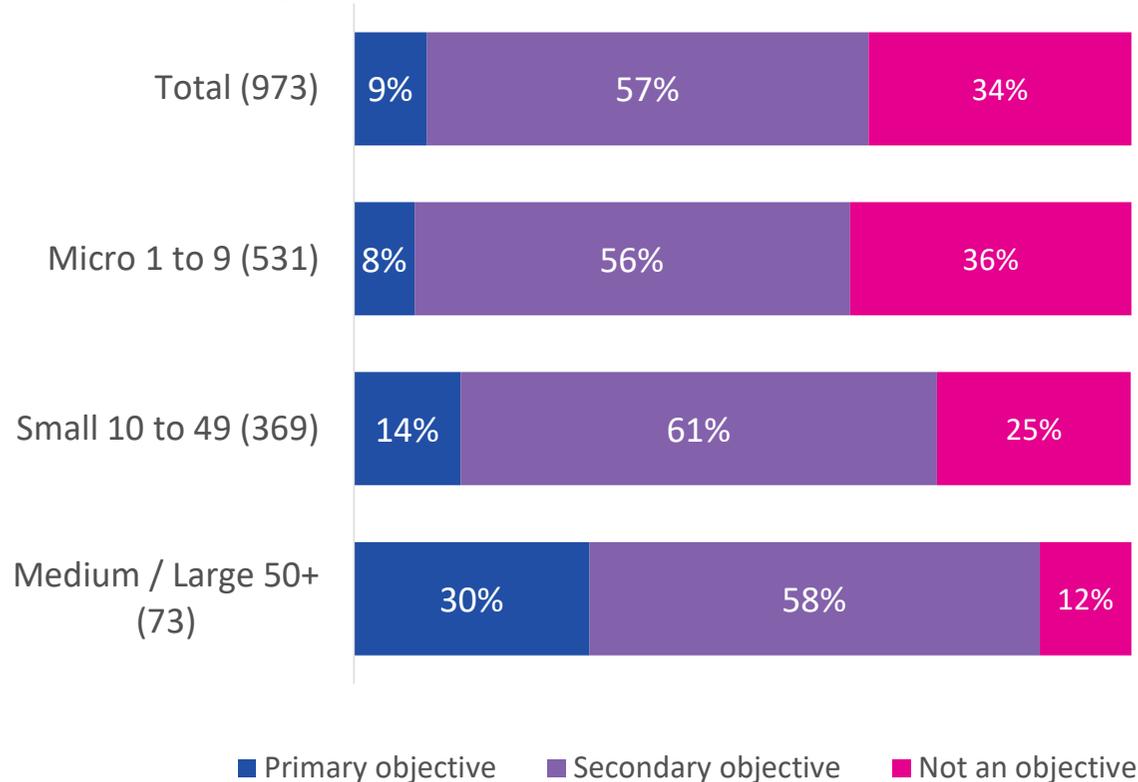


Q37. Do you see climate change as a risk or an opportunity for your business/organisation? All except public sector, unweighted bases shown in brackets

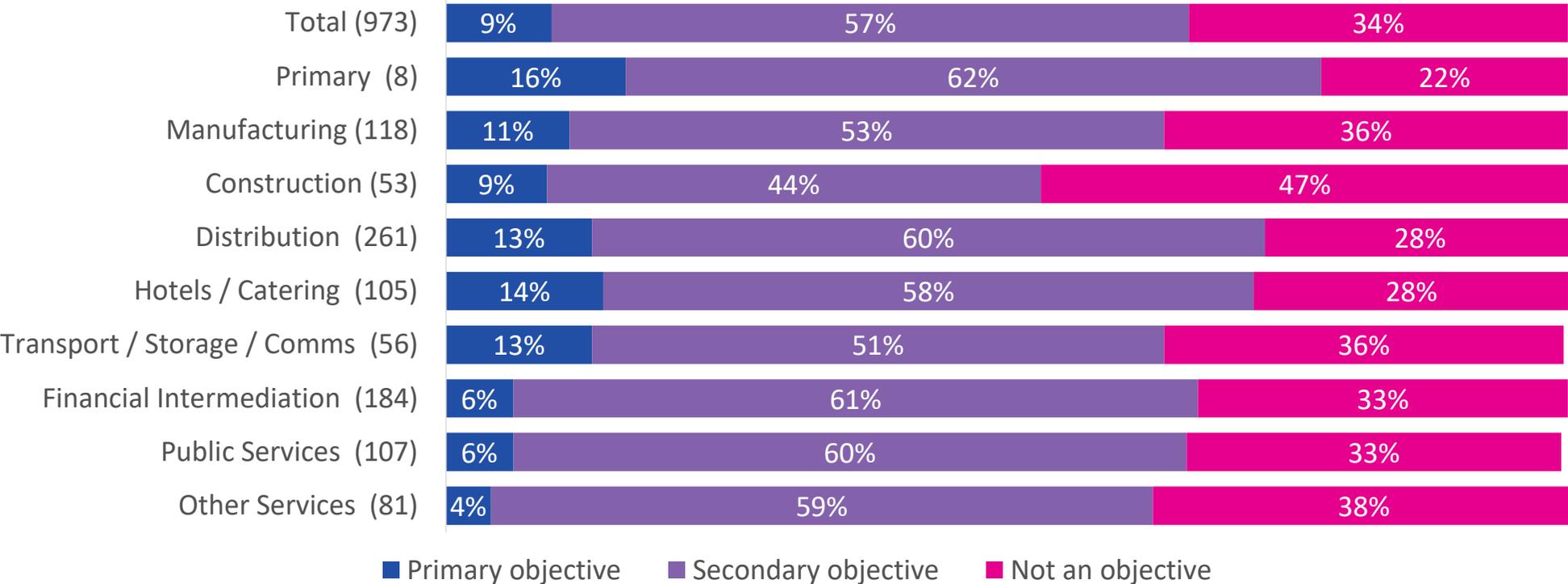


## Extent to which reducing carbon emissions, waste, water use is an objective of the business

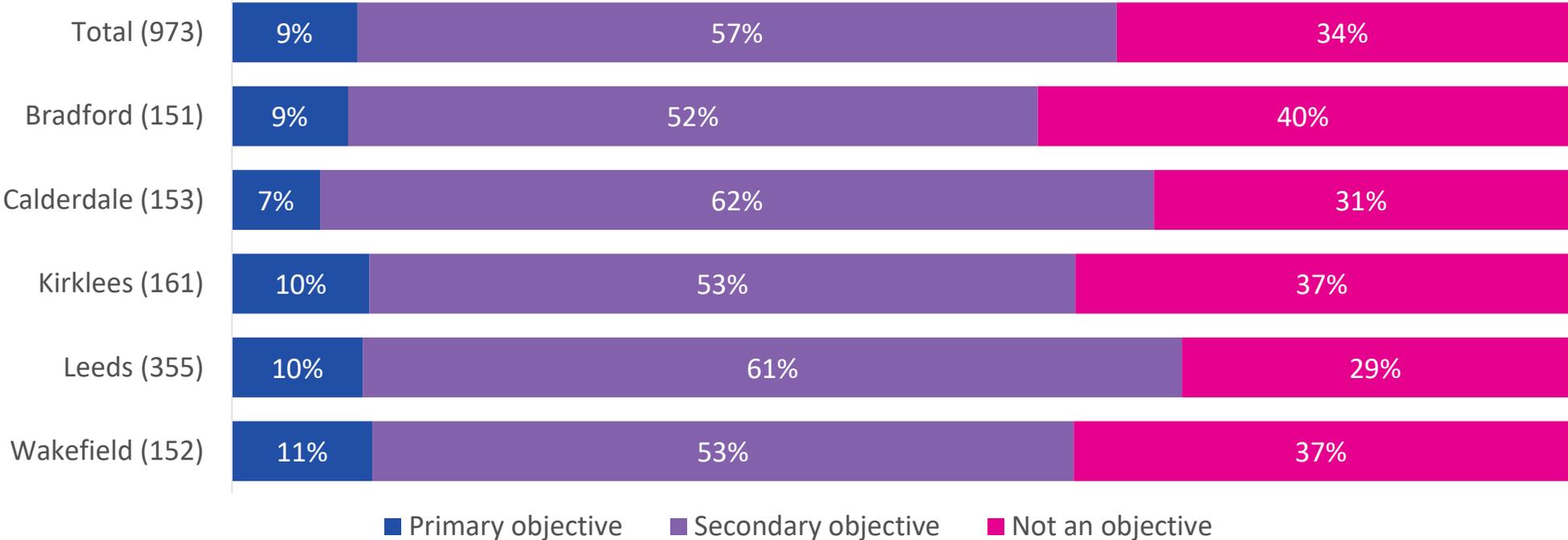
Sixty-six percent of businesses have reducing carbon emissions as an objective, with 57% now citing it as a secondary objective, the highest level recorded.



# Extent to which reducing carbon emissions, waste, water use is an objective of the business



# Extent to which reducing carbon emissions, waste, water use is an objective of the business

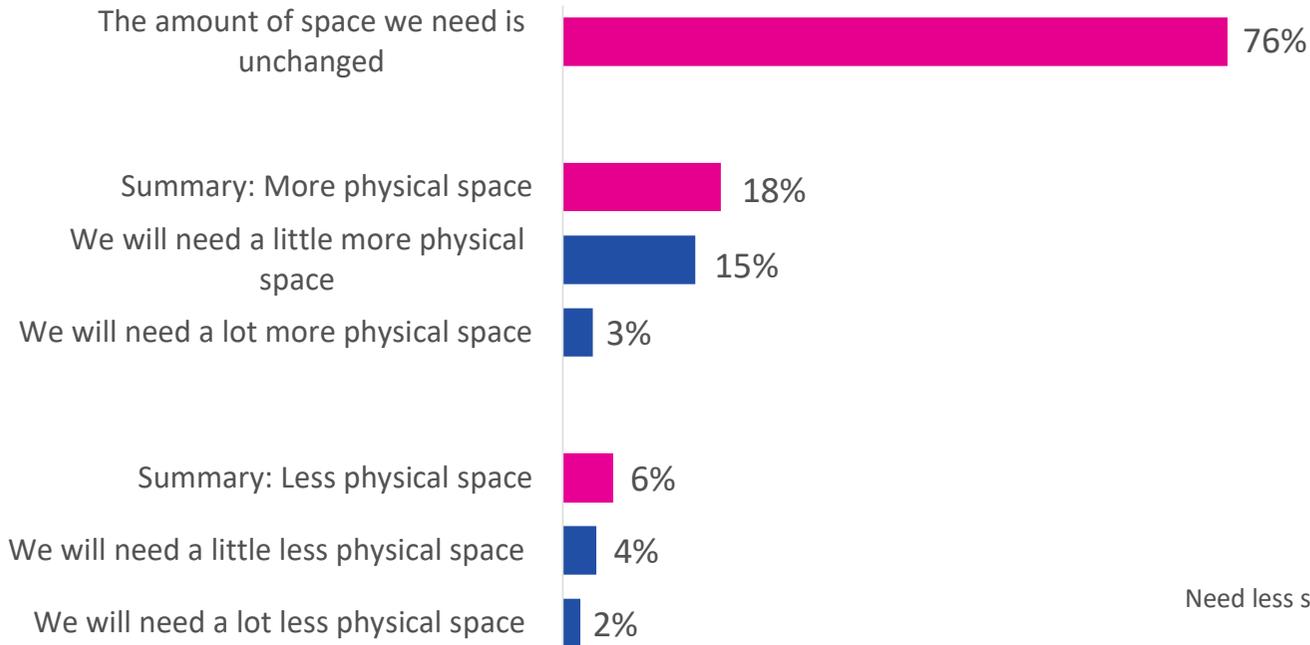


# Business location

## Business location – summary

- Over 7 in 10 business (76%) said the amount of physical space they needed next year is unchanged.
  - Where businesses' needs have changed, they are more likely to need more space (18%) than less space (6%).
  - Whilst in total 24% said their needs would change, 7% said they were planning to move.
- Local business have a mixed view of the quality of local highways and public transport infrastructure, with 42% satisfied and 41% dissatisfied.
  - Dissatisfaction is highest in Kirklees (48%).
  - The three most commonly cited priorities for improvement in relation to highways and public transport infrastructure were:
    - The condition of roads (77%);
    - Levels of traffic congestion (67%)
    - Keeping roads and drains clear and working (56%)

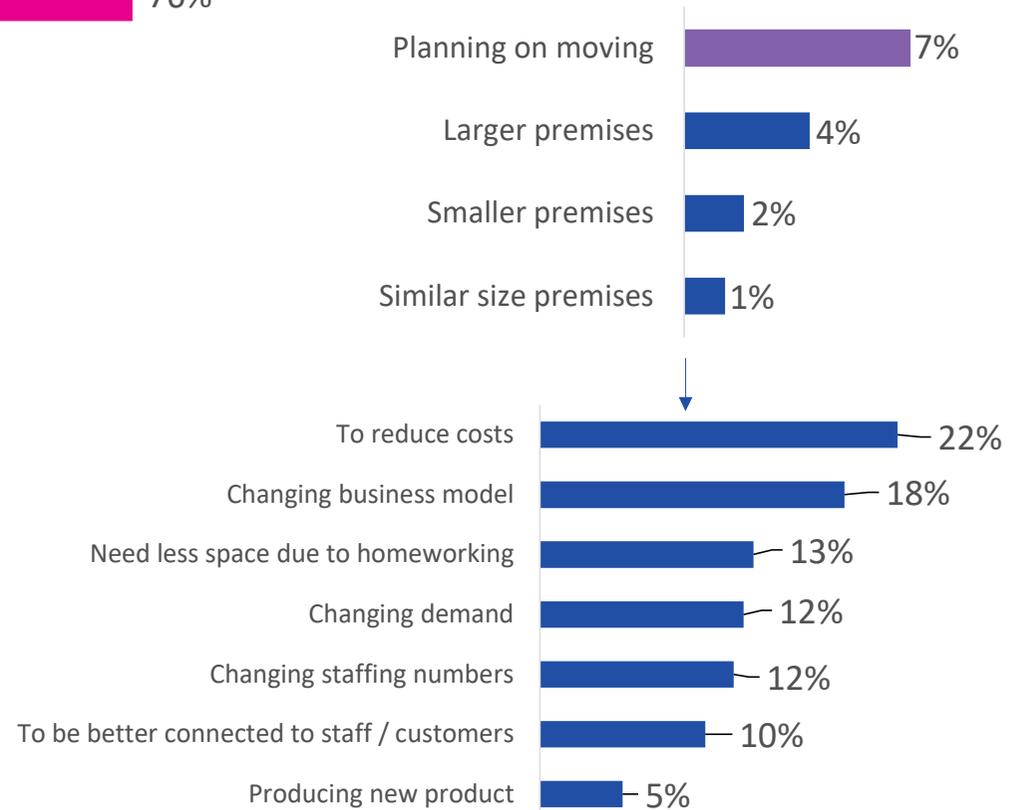
## How the amount of physical space needed may change in the next year



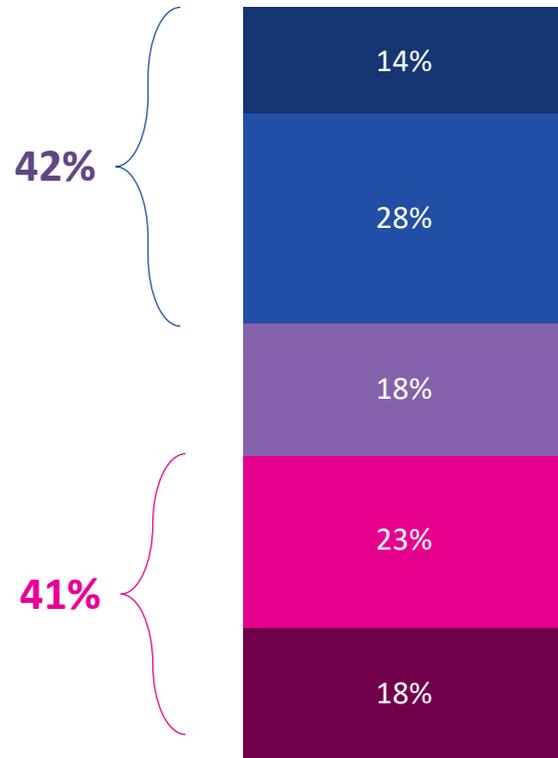
Sectors significantly **more** likely to want more space:  
 Advanced manufacturing (34%)  
 Health and Bioscience (30%)  
 (26% of businesses with 50+ employees wanted more space- a higher proportion, albeit not statically significant)

Sectors significantly **less** likely to want more space:  
 Voluntary/community (11%)

### Are you planning to move premises?



# Satisfaction with the quality of local highways and public transport infrastructure

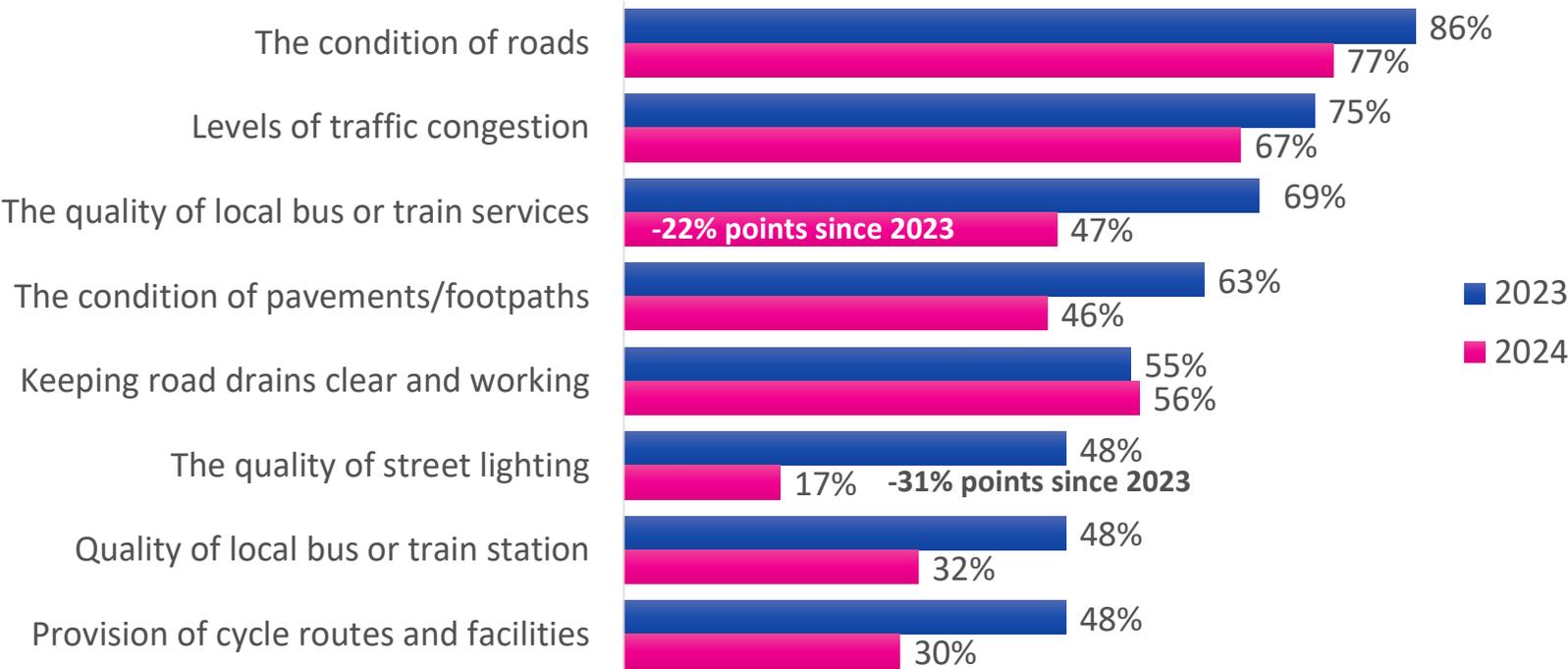


- Fully satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Fully dissatisfied
- Don't know

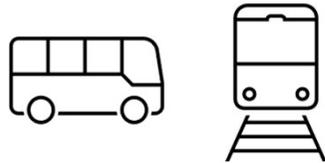
Dissatisfaction is highest in:  
 Head office with branches/subsidiaries elsewhere (58%)  
 Manufacturing (53%)  
 Kirklees (48%)  
 Single sites (45%)

# Priorities for improvement in relation to highways and public transport infrastructure- Up to top 3 selected

The instances of almost all areas being selected decreased, but the largest decreases in were seen in the proportion who selected the quality of bus or train services and the quality of street lighting as priority areas.

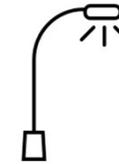


## Variations in priority areas that have seen a decrease since 2023



**Quality of local bus or train services** was a higher priority for those in business services (56%) and lower for those in primary or construction (38%) or distribution (41%)

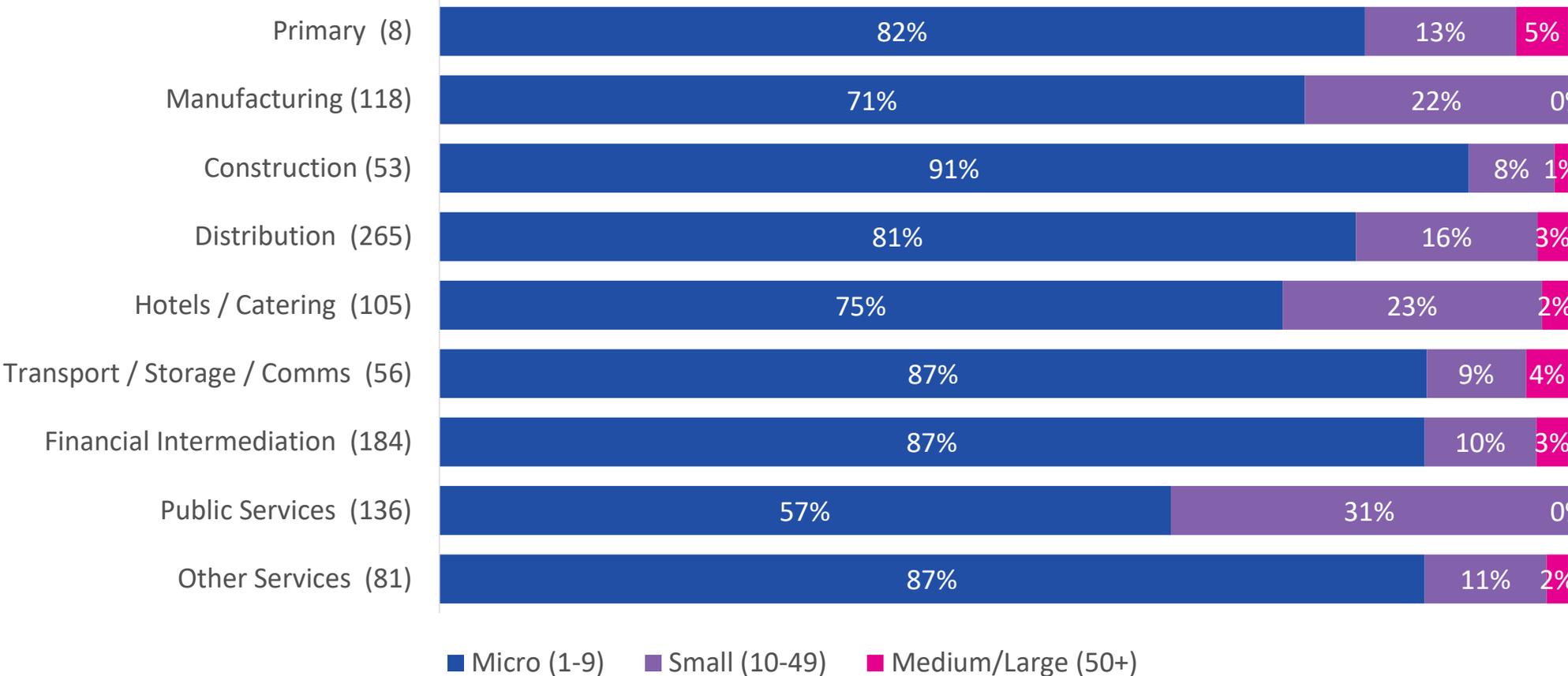
It was a significantly lower priority in Wakefield (29%)



**Quality of street lighting** was most likely to be selected as a priority in Bradford (22%)

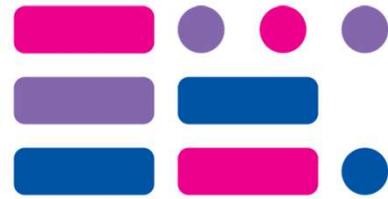
# Profile of businesses

# Size by sector



89% private sector    2% public sector    9% voluntary/community sector organisation





BMG

success decoded